

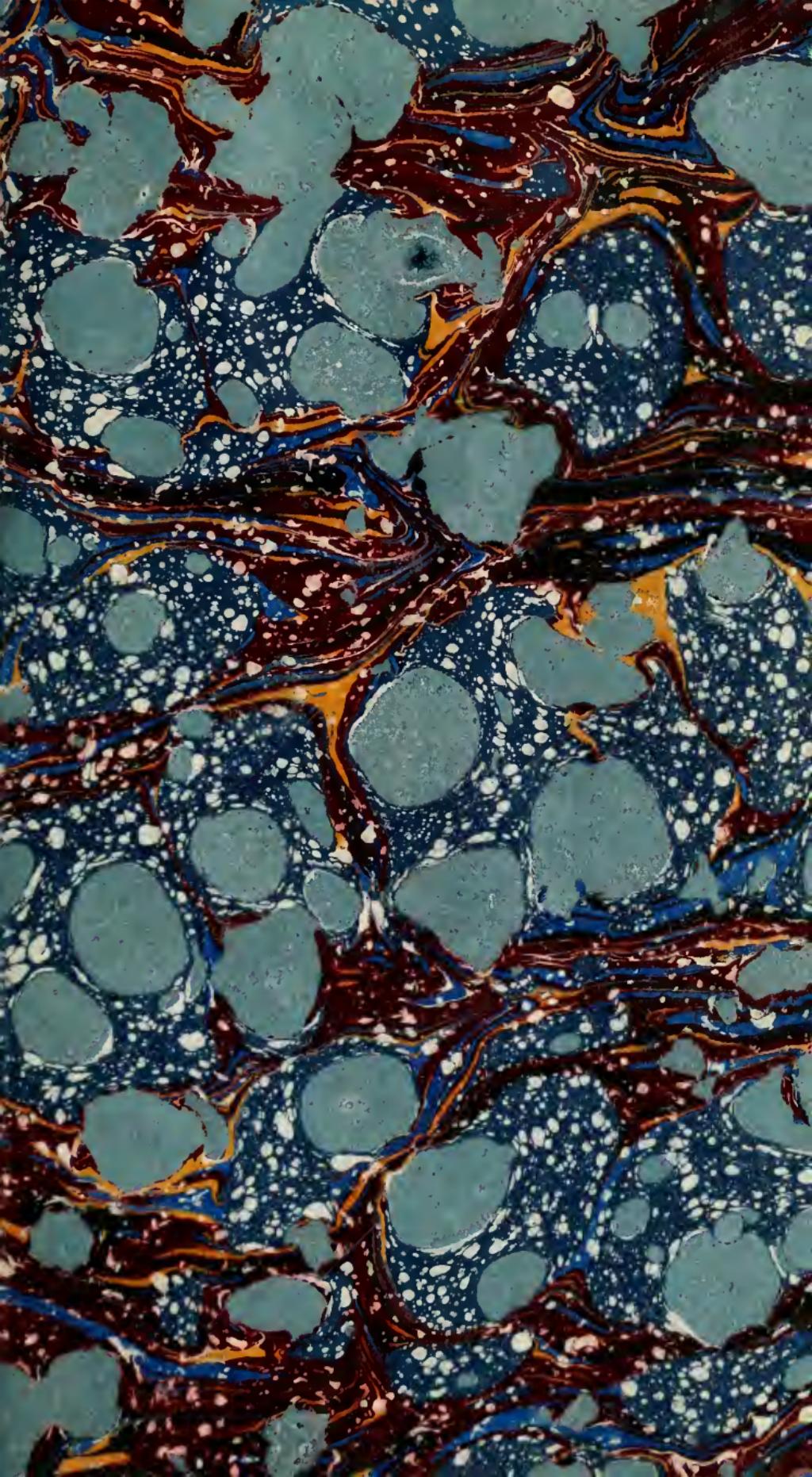
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The Arrest of Mr. Habergam Habakkuk

JOHN MANESTY,

THE LIVERPOOL MERCHANT.

BY

THE LATE WILLIAM MAGINN, LL.D.

WITH

Illustrations by George Cruikshank.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

JOHN MORTIMER, ADELAIDE STREET,
TRAFalGAR SQUARE.

1844.



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JOHN MANESTY.

CHAPTER XVI.

COMMERCIAL LAW AND THE LAW OF ARREST —
ROBIN'S SHARP PRACTICE, AND MANESTY'S
ATONEMENT.

WE have already seen that the most zealous of the elders of Seal-street had some calls upon his attention far more urgent than anything relative to the state of slavery in Africa. He was practically taught that a man-snapping trade existed nearer home,

to which his wandering philanthropy had never paid any attention; and that it was put into execution by a class of men whom cowardice, not conscience, prevents from being engaged in direct piracy or absolute highway robbery. Shuckleborough, irritated to the last degree at the intolerable insolence of Habergam in daring to say a word respecting the affairs of a man to whom he was in debt, and not unfairly annoyed that any one should give the slightest attention to a story at once so calumnious and absurd, especially one who was on familiar terms with his master, and who must have known the utter impossibility of the monstrous tale, attended with his account, which reached no small sum, most carefully and scientifically drawn up, at Habakkuk's

office at eight o'clock on Monday morning. With a grave courtesy, which it cost him much trouble to assume, and had been in a great measure acquired by many sedative whiffs of tobacco, he presented the paper exhibiting the fatal balance.

“If it be convenient to Mr. Habergam,” he said, “to discharge in the course of the forenoon, we should feel it as an obligation.”

“Are thee not coming before the time promised, friend Robin?” said the alarmed corn-factor. “I thought thee had told me I should have had further time on these unfortunate bills of Brown, Badger, and Co., which have done me so much mischief.”

“Unfortunate they may well be called,

Mr. Habergam," returned Shuckleborough; "but, in my mind, more unfortunate to those who have already paid the money upon them than to those who have received it, and as yet have paid nothing. But you need not be alarmed, Mr. Habergam, about them. We promised to overhold them three months, and so we will—there are still three weeks and five days to run. If you look over the account, you will find it relates to far different transactions, of which, of course, you are well aware. Look it over at your leisure—I am sure it is perfectly correct. I must wish you good morning for the present, because business presses; but I shall be here again punctually at ten o'clock, Mr. Habergam."

With a most ceremonious bow, which by

no means inspired satisfaction in the breast of him to whom it was devoted, Robin left the counting-house, leaving its master to go to breakfast with what appetite he might. Habergam scrutinized the accounts with a professional eye, though, before he commenced the examination, he was well aware that no hole was to be found in the book-keeping armour of their over-complimentary calculator.

While thus engaged, a formal and prim messenger, despatched from the meeting-house, came to remind him that it was now nine o'clock, and that the members who had appointed to assemble there on the business of which he knew were already met, and that the brethren waited but for him. Had Habakkuk been of the profane, his answer

to this inopportune message would have been, “The brethren be d—d!” But though the emotion which dictates such wholesale condemnation of those who displease, swelled as strongly in his bosom as in that of the most swearing of troopers, nothing so undevout passed his lips. He merely groaned, and told the messenger to inform those who sent him that he was engaged in unexpected business, and that he thought the matter was not so pressing but that it might stand over.

After the disappointed Mercury, whose curiosity had been strongly excited by the hopes of picking up ample food for slander, had departed, Habergam grunted forth something, as like a curse as possible, upon his folly in meddling in the matter at all,

to which he instinctively attributed this sudden call for the money.

“I may well say,” he muttered, “that it is an unexpected business—and I might say, too, that it is a most annoying business just now. Two thousand eight hundred and forty-seven pounds, odd shillings, and pence; and if I have six hundred and fifty available in the house, it is as much as I have. However, there is no use in loitering about it. Shuckleborough is as punctual as an hour-glass, and I have not quite the time measured by an hour-glass to spare——”

Revolving in his inmost mind on whom of his friends he should call to assist him in his present difficulty, he sallied forth. It is useless to re-write what has been

written a thousand times. He fared as all money-borrowers, from the days of Timon. Those to whom he applied,

“ Did answer in a joint and corporate voice,
That now they are at fall, want treasure, cannot
Do what they would, are sorry——”

In fact, the scarcity of money, which never fails to prevail on all such occasions, was pleaded to the unlucky corn-factor, and he came back—“ no richer in return.”

He had indeed raised a couple of hundred pounds, but his absence had raised a devil which made that two hundred pounds of no value. He had not returned until half-past ten, and thereby missed Robin, who was exact to a moment. His clerks told him that Mr. Shuckleborough was

very cross, and slightly adding that he would return at eleven, when he trusted he would not be trifled with any longer. If poor Habakkuk had been waiting for him, it would have made little difference; but Shuckleborough would have been deprived of a pretext for a more copious discharge of that bile which had been burning within him since the day before. At eleven, he returned, "with countenance severe."

"Mr. Habergam," said he, "you must think my time of little worth, else you would not waste it in the manner which you have done this morning; but as arguing about that, Mr. Habergam, will not tend to the recovery of my hours, let us go to business at once. Have you looked over,

Mr. Habergam, the account I left you, and found it correct?"

"Perfectly," said Habakkuk; "I had no doubt of that."

"All, then, that remains, Mr. Habergam, is to settle it. I have the receipts and vouchers all ready in my pocket." And suiting the action to the word, he produced them. "Two thousand eight hundred and forty-seven pounds, seventeen shillings, and two-pence. If it is any convenience to you, Mr. Habergam, we shall let the small money stand over, and take as on the present account, two thousand eight hundred."

"Why, truly," said Habergam, "friend Robin——"

"My name, sir," interrupted the clerk, with haughty indignation, "is Robert! *I*

was christened, Mr. Habergam, in the manner of a Christian country—not named, like some people, as a dog; and as to my being your friend, sir—it is perfectly new to me how the friendship has sprung up between us! Let us go on to business."

"Then, Robert Shuckleborough," said the corn-factor, in whom what he would call the Old Adam was working strong to knock down a man, whom for more than twenty years of commercial life he had looked upon as not much better than a menial; "the truth is, that I have not got the whole sum."

"I thought so, by ——!" said Robin, with an oath. "Well, what have you to offer, my good man?"

“I have just now about nine hundred pounds, which I can pay up at once.”

“So far, so good. But for the remaining nineteen hundred, how do you propose to arrange?”

“I could give you bills, which have only a few days to run, to the tune of about eleven hundred pounds.”

“Bills!—shew them to me,” said Shuckleborough, with infinite scorn. “Bills—any, I suppose; Brown, Badger, and Co.’s affairs. Bills, my good man, must be taken from you with considerable caution.”

“The bills,” said Habergam, roused, in spite of his circumstances, to anger, “are as good as the bank. Ask of any bankers in Liverpool. I’ll discount them myself at five per cent. this moment.”

“ Hardly, now, my good man,” replied Shuckleborough—“ hardly. I have planted the bills we held of you in every banking-house in Liverpool, cautioning them not to proceed until the time we promised to over-hold has expired, and then to act on their own judgment.”

Habergam looked aghast, but said not a word, as he had handed over the bills, well knowing that they were destined to be condemned.

“ Ay, I thought so—a precious lot! Broadbrim, Bam, and Co.; Humphrey Ham; Fox and Levi,—ay, that is not fox and goose; Mark and Mincing—yes, we know that firm well; Hildebrand Stanley,—what, Sir Hildebrand?”

“ Yes.”

“ For two hundred and fifty pounds ! Why, you know a bill of Sir Hildebrand’s is not worth two hundred and fifty pence, which, I suppose, is as much as you gave him for it; yet this is the only bill of the lot for which I would give you five shillings. Here, I’ll buy this of you at double the price, no matter what that be, of the money you gave Sir Hildebrand. I’ll cash it for you at once out of my own resources. To what amount have you swindled the gentleman ? ”

“ Swindled ! ” said Habergam. “ Mr. Robert Shuckleborough, you have been convivial at an early hour this morning, else you would not dare use such language to me. The bill came into my hands—— ”

“ I am tired,” said Shuckleborough, “ of

listening to this cheating and fraudulent stuff. It is of no consequence how the bill came into *your* hands—you will find it something of more importance to ascertain how it is that you came into our hands."

He whistled, and a pair of uncouth ruffians appeared at the preconcerted signal.

"This is the man," continued Robin, "the defendant in the case of Shackleford *v.* Habergam, (Robin had taken care that his master's name should not appear in the transaction.) Do your duty, Oliver Oglethorpe."

"It aint a pleasant duty," said Oliver—grinning, however, at the same time, in hideous delight; "but, Habakkuk Habergam, here's the writ—here's the original. Come, my old trump, time's precious—we

must tramp at once. Put on your castor. We'll wait for that, for we aint unreasonable."

"What!" said Habergam, greatly astonished, and feeling the insult and injury still more deeply as they were inflicted in presence of some half-score of stupified clerks—"do you mean to say that I am arrested?"

"I do mean that thing," said Oliver Oglethorpe, "and no mistake. Pay the sum marked on the back of the writ, with the fees, and, in course, the thing is at an end; if not, in course, you must go with us."

"In course," said his attendant, a gentleman who rejoiced in the nickname of Measly Mott.

"But," said Habakkuk, much alarmed at

the serious turn things were now taking,
“must this be done at once?”

“Certainly,” said Oliver Oglethorpe,
“unless this good gentleman what brought
us here gives a discharge to the writ,—I
see he shakes his head, so that is no go,—
or you bail.”

“Mr. Shuckleborough,” said Habergam,
“this is a most outrageous proceeding!”

“No, it aint,” said Oliver; “there’s
nothing in it but what’s regular. I defy
the chancellor of the duchy to say that
there’s a bit wrong!”

Habakkuk did not heed the interruption.
“I must send for John Manesty, for I know
Mr. Shackleford is only one of his brokers,
and ask him if he has sanctioned such con-
duct.”

“ Manesty han’t nothing to do with it,” said Oglethorpe. “ I know no more about him than I do of the ghost of Clegg Hall. Come, old chap, do not waste no more of our precious minutes.”

“ At all events, my good man,” said Robin, “ Mr. Manesty, whom you are taking the liberty of calling John Manesty, as if he were your footman, cannot interfere now. He left town immediately after quitting your synagogue for his estate at Wolsterholme, and will not return until the day after to-morrow. On Friday last, he gave me several accounts of shaky people, including yours, my good man, and told me to gather them in as I could ; so I passed the transaction over to Mr. Shackleford, and he has instructed these gentlemen to act.”

There was a prodigious quantity of the thing that is not in this statement of Robin; but his victim was in no condition to repel it.

“ Give me, then, until his return. Why, Oglethorpe, I have known you since you were not much more than a boy.”

“ And employed me, too. Do you remember? But no matter, we are wasting time.”

“ There’s my wife and her three beauteous babbies at home,” said Measly Mott, “ awaiting for the return of a husband and a father from the doing of his duty as an officer on service.”

“ Well, then,” said the subdued corn-factor, “ as you speak of wife and children, let me see mine before you drag me away.”

“Come, Habakkuk, my old buck,” returned Oglethorpe, “that’s too good! Drag you away; you’ll walk quiet enough without dragging. The frau and kinchen, if they want you, will find you easily enough in Church-lane.”

“I can raise the money by the sacrifice of goods, of five times the amount, in the course of the day; but an arrest will be my ruin.”

“There must be an end of all things,” said Robin, taking out a silver watch the size of a coach-wheel from the enormous flap of his waistcoat. “It is perfectly useless, Mr. Habergam, to talk to me—the law must have its course. Good morning to you. I hope I have not been the cause of keeping you from any pleasant entertain-

ment, at which you were engaged to be first fiddle."

He departed to spread through Liverpool and its vicinity the news that Habergam was in gaol, and the officials of the palatinate lost no time in consigning him to his ultimate destination, after taking care to draw from him as much of his ready money as they thought he had a disposition to part with.

All this may be very wrong or very right; but if any one thinks that in this scene Robin, who is a favourite friend of ours, behaved like a tyrant, we beg them to remember that he was sensible of a wrong, judge in his own cause, and conscious of power. Whether this is precisely the kind of tribunal which it is wise or desirable to

erect, is a question to be discussed in other pages than these. Habakkuk, at all events, had sufficient leisure to inquire, whether that charity which exports itself abroad may not be very contracted in its concerns at home.

Manesty's return to his office, in spite of Robin's bouncings, took place nearly about the same time that Habergam had been arrested. No mention of that circumstance was made to him, nor did he make any inquiry which led to it. The day passed over in Pool-lane with its usual quietude, and those who had heard of the rumour spread by drunken Blazes only laughed at it. On inquiring after that worthy gentleman, it was found that he occupied his Sunday evening in getting more and more drunk;

and that when he had brought that business towards a very perfect state of completion, he had, contrary to the advice and remonstrances of every one connected with the administration of the tap, staggered out, uttering incoherent oaths. During the evening he had been very troublesome; he called every man of anything like a decent appearance a pirate, and swore that he knew them on the coast of Africa. In particular, he could identify, and so could the crew of the ship Juno, now lying at Gravesend, the greasy lubbers whom he had met in the psalm-shop. He knew them all well, and could hang them all up,—indeed, for that matter, he could hang half Liverpool; and if he could not hang the other half, he well knew they richly deserved it.

After wanting to fight with every one in the room, he departed in disgust. He had no kit, nothing but what he wore about him; he had paid honestly for all he called for, and had foolishly thrown about some pieces of gold and silver; and of him nothing more was known at the Blackamoor's Arms. The landlord said he was sorry such a fellow had come into his house, and sorry, too, that he left it in such a state. "I think," said he, "he has tumbled into the river, and is drowned."

In eight or ten days the surmise of the landlord proved to be true: a body almost decomposed was washed up under St. Nicholas' church, the dress and other indications of which proved it to be that of Blazes. Nothing was found about him except some

foreign coins, doubloons, dollars, &c., amounting in value to some ten or twelve pounds. No marks of violence appeared upon his person, and the only conclusion that the coroner's inquest could come to, was that of "found drowned." Those, of course, who had entertained any suspicion that Manesty was connected with the business charged against him by the deceased, had their suspicions strengthened by the mode of his death; they had not been weakened by the arrest of Habergam.

But that was all over now. Two or three days had elapsed after he had been removed from the den of Oglethorpe, where, of course, he was most unmercifully fleeced, to the prison of the palatinate, Lancaster Castle, before Manesty was informed of the

occurrence. He strongly rebuked Robin, and sent an instant discharge, with a letter of the most kindly apology. The thing had occurred in his temporary absence, and Mr. Shuckleborough had quite mistaken instructions which he had given a few days before.

It was certain that a sudden pressure had come upon the house, and he had directed that some strictness should be used to obtain outstanding monies of long date; but it had never entered his head that any one should have been exposed to the inconveniences of arrest, to which he or his father before him had never resorted in any instance during a commercial course of nearly half-a-century, and which, above all things, he deeply regretted should be employed in the case of Habakkuk Habergam, with whom he had

been so long knit in brotherly love. As for the transactions which unhappily gave occasion for this unlucky mistake, he begged that nothing should be thought of them until payment was perfectly convenient, no matter at how distant a date; and as for the bills of Brown, Badger, and Co., he had taken them out of his office to throw them into his own private desk, there to remain until Habakkuk himself asked for them.

Nothing could be fairer or more handsome; and if the poor corn-factor emerged from prison with blasted credit and crippled resources, spirits broken and his self-importance humiliated, to become a bankrupt in three months, and an inmate of the grave in three more, no one could in the slightest degree impute those catastrophes to Mr.

Manesty, who had generously flung his bills into the fire, sorrowfully attended the funeral, and headed a subscription for his family with the liberal donation of 100*l.*

CHAPTER XVII.

A WITNESS RISES UP AGAINST MANESTY—THE PROGRESS OF SUSPICION—OGLETHORPE'S CUNNING OVERMATCHED BY OZIAS'.

DICCON, the potboy at the Blackamoor's Arms, was a gentleman of that degree of intellect generally displayed in his county and his calling by persons of his degree,—that is to say, he was principally to be distinguished from a hog by the number of his legs. The fact of the sailor having

been at the house where he performed his functions, and the melancholy catastrophe which followed, had a great effect upon his mind, (or what served as such,) and so deranged the ordinary visions of pots and pipes, which usually haunted it, that he could not talk of anything else for months. Diccon was the hero of the tap, and related the tale three or four times every evening. To be sure, he had not much to tell; nothing, in fact, more than that a drunken and abusive sailor had spent an evening in the house, out of which he staggered, and was, some time afterwards, cast up by the Mersey, drowned. To this, time added a few embellishments, not due to Diccon's imagination, a quality in which he did not shine, but to the various suggestions of his

auditors, from time to time, whose contributions being thankfully accepted, by degrees swelled the story into a tale of terror.

Among his hearers, one evening, was an errand boy belonging to a neighbouring butcher—a boy of some twelve or thirteen years of age, and just as intelligent as Diccon himself. All on a sudden a thought seemed to strike this ingenuous youth.

“Wasn’t that the sailor, Diccon,” he asked in his native dialect, which we have already declined attempting, “that had three of the fingers of his left hand cut off?”

Diccon, after much scratching of his head, was inclined to think that such was the case, but his memory was somewhat like the shifting sands of his native Mersey,

into which, when anything is absorbed, it rarely re-appears. The nymph who performed multifarious and miscellaneous duties in all departments of the hostel, had, however, a sharper recollection. The sailor, in an amorous moment, had clasped her waist with his left arm, and as she pushed it away in a fit of indignant chastity, she had particularly observed the mutilated hand. She did not state that she had a more special reason for noticing it, which was, that in a moment after the repulse, the remaining finger and thumb had fished out a guinea from the capacious pockets of its owner, which gave the said arm full liberty to resume its position with more advantage than before. There was testimony sufficient without it to establish that Blazes' left hand

had suffered one of the usual casualties of his profession; and Sukey did not, perhaps, see the necessity of wasting evidence.

When Tunimas O'Nobs-o-Chops found that his suspicion, which had never before occurred to him, was correct, he was in a sad taking. He turned as pale as the rich thick coating of grease and dirt which was solidly plastered on his face would permit, and in an agony of terror, exclaimed, "Lord, save us! they cannot hang me for it, can they?"

The company looked aghast at this self-ineculpatory exclamation of the butcher's boy, and set him down at once as the murderer; for of the sailor's being murdered, not one among them now doubted. Sukey declared that she could never abide the

boy, for he had the gallows in his looks—a discovery never made till this moment, and the same conclusion was come to by the rest of the party, half-a-dozen of whom at once speedily secured the unlucky Tummas, by grasping him by the collar with such hearty good-will, as almost to shake him out of his clothes.

A great ferment was, of course, immediately excited throughout the house, and it soon caught the attention of Mr. Oliver Oglethorpe, who was drinking in the bar-parlour with the landlord's wife and daughter—he rum, rather slightly diluted with water; they tea, not so slightly diluted with rum. His professional eye soon saw a chance that his exertions might by some means, which he did not stop to scrutinize,

turn up to profit; and accordingly, Oliver lost no time in proceeding to the scene of capture, where he found Tummas half-dead with terror. All present knew Oglethorpe, and to him it was unanimously agreed that the sifting of the evidence should be committed. The butcher's boy fell down on his knees before him, and begged for mercy, bellowing like a bull-calf.

“ Do not be alarmed at me,” said Oliver, with much magnanimity; “ I am your best friend here. I feel that I am sitting as a judge; and, as I heard Mr. Justice Vulture say at the last assizes, ‘ a judge is always counsel for the prisoner.’ ”

And to say the truth, Oliver acted in the capacity about as earnestly and sincerely as ninety-nine out of every hundred

of the ermined gentlemen who have promulgated the dictum from the bench—that is to say, he laboured hard to have him hanged. Paper, pens, ink, were soon provided, assisted by which, and a replenished tumbler, Mr. Oglethorpe proceeded on his examination.

“ You have confessed, it seems, that you murdered the sailor, called Blazes, whom you identify by his want of three fingers, by flinging him into the Mersey, where he was drowned. Is it not so?”

“ Yes, sir,” said Tummas ; “ it is true enough. He was drowned, sure as death, in the Mersey, and he had no more than a finger and a thumb on his left hand ; but I did not know at the time his name was Blazes.”

“That’s not material, as Chief Baron Sir Benjamin Blunderbuss of the ’Chequer, says, when he does not want to read an affidavit. What could have induced you to commit this horrid crime?”

“I did not know ’twas hanging matter, sir,” said the trembling Tummas; “and thought there was no harm in it, sir.”

“There’s a blood-thirsty young warment!” said Sukey.

“It is a crime by common law,” said Oliver, “and also by statute made hanging by the 55th of Edward the Sixth, and the 29th of Anne, chapter—no matter what. But, young man, you must know it was hanging matter. Did not you see Whelock, and Jones, hanged last year for it?”

“That was for throwing a child into the

fire, sir," said Tummas, "not a man into the water."

"It makes no difference," said Oliver, solemnly, "so that the man is murdered, whether it is by fire or water. What o'clock did this take place?"

"About half-past ten, sir," said Tummas.

"Yes, Tummas," said Diccon, "I'll bear thee out in that. It was just as I was going to put up the chain, which I do every night, exactly on the half hour; but I didn't see thee with him."

"No, Diccon," said Tummas, "I was not there a minute, and thee was in the yard."

"Do you mean then to say, that it took up such a short time," asked Oliver, inhaling a pinch of snuff, "to commit the murderer?"

“I never committed no murder,” howled Tummas, in despair; “it aint a murder to call a man out of a public-house. Is it, sir?”

“That is as it may be,” answered Oliver. “For what purpose did you call him out?”

“For no purpose,” replied Tummas; “it were for a sixpence.”

“You do not mean to say that you murdered the man for such a sum as a sixpence? I am sure,” said Oliver, with much indignation, “I’d scorn murdering any man for such a trifle”—a sentiment, the generosity of which excited much approbation throughout the room.

“I murdered him for nothing at all,” said Tummas.

“Good God!” exclaimed Oglethorpe,

roused to much indignation. "Murder a man for nothing! I'd be ashamed of myself to confess anything so low. It's enough to make one sick."

"It was because I did not murder him nohow!" cried Tummas. "Another sailor, almost as drunk as the man himself, met me a going into this here house. 'I'll give thee sixpence, younker,' says he to me, 'if thee'll call out that sailor I see sitting in the window—him as is making all that gallows row; he's an old shipmate of mine. Tell him, Mr. Dick, of the Dutchman, wants him.' So I went in, and I said what I was bid; and he jumped up like a cock when he heard the name, and he said that he was a damned good fellow, who he knew would come, in spite of all nonsense

between them; and then though everybody wanted him to stay, he wouldn't. He said he was going to see a man that could buy and sell them all. So he went out, after paying his shot."

"Yes, I can bear Tummas out in that," interrupted Diccon; "he paid his shot, sure enough, five times over. He would force it upon me, though I did not want for to take it," an assertion heard with considerable incredulity by the audience.

"And when he saw the other, they shook hands fifty times over, and were like brothers. I heard them say that they'd go somewhere to drink down the unkind words they had in the morning. The one that came out of the house called the other 'commodore,' and wanted to douse his hat

to him, but the sailor that sent me would not let him. They went off together along the quay, and as God is my judge, there's all I knows about it; and it is hard to be hanged, and I so young, for that," blubbered forth Tummas, with deep energy of lamentation.

"Don't bellow, you brat," said Oliver, not at all pleased at seeing his anticipated prey fast slipping through his fingers. "Did you ever see the strange sailor before or since?"

"Never, Mr. Oglethorpe—never," answered Tummas; "if it weren't next morn, as I was a-going, about three o'clock, to master's cellar, in Mud-lane, about the slaughtering of some sheep; and then, I am almost sure, I saw him going up into

the yard at the back of the great corn-store opposite; but he was precious sober then, which could not be if he were a drinking all the night with the other—and fine and drunk too, when they went off together; and I did not notice him coming out."

"Whose corn-store is that?" asked Oliver, with much curiosity.

"I am sure I don't know," said Tummas.
"I never axed."

"Why, I thought every fool in Liverpool knewed it belongs to John Manesty," exclaimed Diccon; "he was one of the people that Blazes, when he was drunk, was blowing up as a pirate."

"What sort of a looking man was the strange sailor?" inquired Oglethorpe, still more eagerly.

“ He was dressed like any other sailor,” said Tummas. “ He was a tall, big, stout chap; but nothing particular.”

“ You would know him again, perhaps?” said Oliver, with increasing earnestness.

“ Yes,” was the answer, “ I think I would; for a ship’s light flashed full in his face as he walked away, and I saw him well.”

“ Any mark on his face?”

“ No—no mark. Ho! what am I saying? there is a mark, sure enough. He has a swinging cut across his forehead. I saw him point it to the other, and they both laughed. Now, your worship, there’s the truth, and sure you wont hang me.”

“ Not for this,” said Oliver, rubbing his hands, and chuckling with ineffable delight.

“ Some other matter will in all probability turn up; but take care to be forthcoming in the morning. Bring my coat and hat, Sukey, I must go home.”

The delighted Tummas was emancipated, and the equally delighted Oliver wended on his way.

“ Hallo!” said he, “ isn’t this a game! It’s too late to do anything to-night; and besides, I have not yet got at the ease as I wish. It was on the very day that I nabbed Habergam at his suit; and I remember Habergam at our crib dropping some hints about fear of exposure being at the bottom of the arrest. I knew well enough that it was all gammon about Manesty’s being out of town. I think it’s like that old Shuckleborough is at the

‘Dolphin,’ and if he is, I know that he has drunk quite enough to make him easy to be pumped. It will cut well either way. If I hang him, there’s my forty pounds reward; if not, in such a case as this, hush-money is twenty times the value of blood-money; and I do not want to harm any man, if I get more by letting it alone. Ha, ha, ha! I’m almost ready to burst my sides a-laughing to think that these are the capers of Solid John.”

With the most mirthful emotions, he entered the “Dolphin,” where, as he expected, he found Shuckleborough; but in the present instance, the tables were turned; and instead of the official pumping the clerk, the contrary was the case. The happy prospect before him caused Ogle-

thorpe, who had been drinking all day, to indulge in such liberal potations, that he was completely fuddled before Robin had reached half way towards that state of felicity. Instead, therefore, of gaining anything by the meeting, in the way of information, his tipsy questioning was so unskilfully conducted, as to arouse the suspicions of Robin that something was brewing against his master. Even in drunkenness Oglethorpe retained a sufficient quantity of professional caution not to drop a particle of the evidence he had just acquired; but there was something in his hints, and still more in his manner, to excite very painful sensations in the faithful retainer of the house of Manesty and Co. In a short time, he took his de-

parture, leaving two pipes of his regular quantity unsmoked.

Proceeding homeward, not at all at ease, he met Ozias Rheinenberger, returning from a late hymn meeting, and to him, in the fulness of his heart, he told what had occurred. The Moravian gravely shook his head, and said nothing more than that he would see John in the morning. They parted in a few minutes, and Shuckleborough gained his bed, puzzled with doubts, and annoyed by apprehensions, neither of which could he bring before his mind in any definite form.

“He’s a deep old file, that Robin,” said Oglethorpe, ruminating as he emerged from the “Dolphin,” “but I’ll shape it without him. I’ll have it all right to-morrow, as

straight as a nail. As for that Jack-the-Giant-Killer story of his being Hoskins the pirate—pooh! that's all rubbish—but that you, John Manesty,—you, Solid John, murdered Blazes, I have no more doubt than that my name is Oliver Oglethorpe."

Pleased with this conviction, he retired to his couch, there to dream of captions and executions, until the arrival of the morning, dispelling these visions of the night, called him up to turn them into the realities of the day. He carefully perused the notes which he had made at the "Blackamoor's Arms," and felt more and more certain that his suspicions were right.

"God!" said he, with a chuckle of delight, "this is something—one of the first

men on 'Change. Active officer—inflexible duty—not to be daunted by influence—not to be bought by money—aint I, though?" continued he, putting his finger on his nose—"we'll try that on first. But, 'faith! the rum was too strong of the water last night; and these notes are not the clearest. I must go and find the boy again; and that soon, for fear anybody else should pick him up. The people who were there last night were stupid blockheads; but everybody aint stupid in Liverpool, I guess. If my friend Measly was to get wind of this, wouldn't he be into it, as a hot knife into a pound of butter."

With these motives for activity, he was not long in despatching breakfast, and sallying forth on his expedition. As he

proceeded, he thought he might as well have what he called a squint at the corn-store, in Mud-lane, into which the sailor had vanished; and on arriving there, he saw that, besides the general back entrances, there was a small door in one of the outhouses, above which, in the next floor, some feet to its right (none stood immediately over it), was a window, similar to that of a parlour. Careless observers might not have suspected that there existed between this window and the door, so far removed from each other, that connexion which the quick eye of Oglethorpe at once rightly conjectured to exist. A few pints of beer distributed among the stupid draymen and porters, and other loiterers in the yard, obtained for him the information that they could not tell any-

thing about this door; that none of them had ever seen it open; that as for the window, it was that of the room which old Mr. Hibblethwaite had used as his office; that since his death, it was little more than a lumber-room, rarely entered by any one; that the only way to go to it was through the front of the building; and that it was morally impossible it could be got at through the rear.

Oglethorpe winked knowingly on hearing this last piece of intelligence; and after learning, in fact, that the draymen and their companions knew nothing of the premises on which they spent half their lives, or of the concerns hourly going on before their eyes, further than the business of their own drays or carts, cast upon them

a smile of compassionate benevolence and departed.

“No communication with that 'ere room from that 'ere door,” thought he. “Say ye so, my joskins? Well, how one man differs from another! Here's a lot of muffs as has spent all their days in that yard—and I never entered it till this precious morning—and in half-an-hour I know more of its windings than them. Pretty spoons! they've less sense than their drayhorses, and their brains are thicker than their own cotton packs. But there's no use of being proud. 'Tisn't every one that's fit——”

The self-gratulatory sentence was cut short by his arrival at the “Blackamoor's Arms,” whither he speedily summoned the

butcher's boy. Tummas came, considerably relieved of the apprehensions of the preceding evening, and repeated, over a glass of ale, his story, without any considerable variation or addition. The only fresh particular Oglethorpe could glean was, that the strange sailor was much older than Blazes; that he was, he should think, as old as master, about half a hundred; and that he believed his hair was grey, but would not be sure.

Oglethorpe gave the boy sixpence, and told him to be in the way to-morrow, when he would ask him to come and see a gentleman who might do good to them all. Cautioning Tummas with much solemnity to keep a still tongue in his head, as there was no knowing what a scrape he might get

into, if the story should reach the ears of the judges, he went away, muttering half aloud—"All's right as a die. Now if I could get into that corn-store——"

To avoid suspicion that he had any secret object in view, Oglethorpe met the boy in the common tap-room open to everybody. He knew that at ten o'clock in the morning there was little chance of sailors being absent from their vessels, and they were the only class of persons whom the story would interest. The clodpoles from the country—drovers, wagoners, carters, and others of the same class would, he knew, be the only guests, and they would be too much engaged in discussing the interesting affairs of the morning market over their beer and bacon to listen to the conversations of any one

else. Besides, he depended upon their assured and undoubted stupidity to protect him from their comprehending his drift, even if attracted by the story. As for the boy himself, he knew that he could easily frighten him into silence, as he effectually did by his hint of the judges—awful personages in the eyes of such people as Tummas, whose very wigs are endowed with supernatural powers—which revived in a great measure the hempen terrors which had originally agitated him.

The company was precisely of the kind anticipated by Oliver, and their attention was occupied as he had expected. One man, who had entered the tap-room a few minutes after him, and took his seat not far from the same table, was the only person of

a different cast. The bailiff gave him a sharp and scrutinizing glance, which satisfied him there was no cause of alarm in that quarter. He was a mean-featured, poorly clad, quiet little man, apparently a humble clerk in a mercantile house, for he immediately took out of his pockets what Oglethorpe ascertained to be an order-book, two or three invoices, half-a-dozen accounts, and a ready-reckoner, and fell to work upon them with paper and pencil. Immersed in these, as he sipped a bowl of coffee, as admirable in quality as Jamaica ever produced, and as abominable in preparation as the handmaiden of the “Blackamoor’s Arms” could perpetrate, he seemed to have lost all consideration of everything else in the world; and Oglethorpe, convinced that

his ears were closed to all around, paid him no further attention.

He was much mistaken, however. The silent and abstracted accountant had not merely heard, but absolutely drunk in every syllable of the conversation. It was, in fact, Ozias Rheinenberger, who, alarmed by the tenour of Shuckleborough's communication, had determined to keep his eye upon the movements of Oglethorpe during the day, and had followed him at a distance from the moment he left his house. He had hoped, that by tracking him wherever he went, he might obtain some clue to discover what was the meaning of his obscure hints, dropped on the previous night. Little did he expect what it was his lot to hear—the information he obtained was far

more copious than he could have anticipated—and, alas! beyond all power of calculation, far more afflicting to his soul than his worst fears had ever suggested. Long-trained command of countenance prevented any betrayal of his feelings. As he eagerly listened, he not merely feigned to work, but actually did work at the figures, which would have occupied him at home; and when, methodically, he paid for his coffee, and rose to follow Oglethorpe, whose destination he knew was directed towards the corn-store, in Mud-lane, nobody would have known that anything beyond the ready-reckoner had engaged his meditations.

Oliver took the expected course; and Ozias, having seen him prying about the yard, went to his own counting-house, and

hastened to his private apartment. He was there alone. He buried his face in his handkerchief, burst into tears, and exclaimed, “Oh! my brother.”

CHAPTER XVIII.

OZIAS AND MANESTY—THE SUSPECTED MERCHANT'S
INDIGNATION AND ALARM.

ERE long the fit passed over, and he was on his way to Manesty's office. He found him there occupied as usual, and was greeted with the wonted grave welcome.

“I would be alone with thee,” said Ozias. “See thou to the Scripture which is written in the second verse of the nineteenth chapter of the first book of Samuel.”

Manesty, well used to such style of conversation, opened, without any surprise, the Bible, which always lay upon his desk, and soon found the passage referred to. In spite of his command of feature, a cloud visibly came over his countenance, as he read the ominous verse. It is the warning of Jonathan to David:—

“But Jonathan, Saul’s son, delighted much in David; and Jonathan told David, saying, ‘Saul, my father, seeketh to kill thee: now, therefore, I pray thee, take heed to thyself until the morning, and abide in a secret place, and hide thyself.’”

“What means this?” asked Manesty, with perfect composure. “Come into my private room. Speak out,” continued he, on arriving there—“no one can hear. What does this mean?”

Something seemed to choke the utterance of Ozias, for he remained in silence. He had again recourse to the Bible, and pointed out to Manesty the second verse of the seventh chapter of Micah:—

“The good man is perished out of the earth; and there is none upright among men; they all lie in wait for blood; they hunt every man his brother with a net.”

“Truce with this nonsense,” said Manesty, pushing the sacred volume aside with far more impatience than it was his wont to display, especially when that book was in question. “Nonsense, I say,” continued he, checking himself, “for even the holiest things may so be used, and so intruded out of place, as to transfer to themselves some portion of the slight which is due to him who intrudes them. Speak, man, whatever

you have to say. Speak it out, Ozias—speak it out in the name of the Lord!"

"As I am so adjured," replied the Moravian, "I will speak. I have come to talk to thee about the sailor, who was found drowned six months ago."

"What! are not people done with him yet?" said Manesty, somewhat peevishly. "I thought all that was settled long since."

"I did not think that *all* was settled," said Ozias; "but be it so. All, at least, appeared to be settled in the eyes of man. Thy name was coupled with that of the sailor."

"Absurd!" cried Manesty. "No voice dared lift itself to accuse me of anything so atrocious as being concerned in his death."

"No voice was lifted up. Hath no voice

spoken, not being lifted up? But be it so. It was known that this man had heavily accused thee, and borne the accusation before the elders. That it was proposed to look into the root of the matter on the next day, and that the morning found the sailor vanished, never more to be seen until the waters cast him up a corpse. Nor was it forgotten that he who proposed the investigation, in a spirit of brotherly love towards thee and thy good name, was seized at thy suit at the very moment it was to have been made, and thrown into bondage. And it was thought, too, that the hasty despatching of the 'Juno' to the coast of Africa, with mariners on board, who, he said, could confirm his testimony, was an act of precaution, not of accident."

“And it is thought, I suppose, now,” said Manesty, “that while I am sitting in Pool-lane, I am personally directing the brigandage and freebooting which yesterday’s advices inform us is going forward on that same coast. Nobody regretted the disappearance of this drunken Rabshakeh more than I did. I was sorry to find that any one could have been so absurd, any brother Christian so uncharitable, as to impute to me crimes which all Liverpool, I may say all the mercantile world, knew it to be physically impossible I could have committed; and the exposure of the falsehood of this fellow’s ravings, though certainly not at all necessary to the clearing of my character, would have done me the service of checking, if not envious thoughts,

yet spiteful tongues. That he was drowned, it is true. Is that an unusual occurrence, or one to be wondered at, when we consider the drunken and reckless habits of our mercantile sailors? "Here," said he, taking up a newspaper—"here we have, in the *Courant* of last Saturday, accounts of no less than four of them found drowned, just as this Blazes was—all of them proved to have sallied forth, as he did, in a state of intoxication from the low public-houses on the quays. The wonder is, that such accidents, as they are called, do not occur in a tenfold proportion. And if any of those poor men who perished through their own folly and intemperance last week had, while that self-imposed madness to which they owed their death, been raging upon them, insulted, as

it is very likely they did, persons of wealth or station, is it just or reasonable, consistent with common sense or common Christianity, to impute their fate to the men against whom they had loosed their unruly tongues?"

"It would not," said Ozias. "It would be very much at variance with justice, reason, sense, and Christian feeling. And be it so. But——"

"As for the brig 'Juno,' I know nothing about her," said the now somewhat excited merchant. "Perhaps the fellow who spoke knew no more, and flung out the first name of an African vessel that occurred to his maudlin memory at random. But I *did* inquire about her, nevertheless; and I found that on the very day before this Mr. Blazes was blurting his impertinent nonsense she

had been purchased by the house of Bolt, Shackell, and Co., of Fetter-lane, London, and by them freighted in a few days, and sent to her original destination. I have no connexion, as you are well aware, with that firm. The few accidental dealings we have had together in the course of business were anything but friendly ; and unless I was endowed with the gift of prophecy, as it seems I am suspected of being possessed of that of ubiquity, how could I have had anything to do with a transaction, the most material part of which was over before this trumpery accusation was made, and the whole business, in all probability, concluded before any advices from Liverpool, arising out of the affair, could have reached Gravesend?"

"It may be so," said Ozias, who had

listened attentively; “ and be it so !
But——”

“ Pardon me for a moment, Rheinen-
berger,” interrupted Manesty, “ and I am
done. As for Habergam, you know I had,
in reality, nothing more to do with his case
than to regret the arrest and to cancel the
debt. It all arose from the zeal of Robin,
excited to anger against the poor man by
what he had heard from you. He took ad-
vantage of my momentary absence, and en-
gaged Shackleford to sue on some obligations
which I had passed to him, in the ordinary
way of business, and on which I should not
have dreamt of proceeding if a shilling’s
worth of them had never been liquidated.
The heavy bills which I had in my own
desk were not proceeded upon, because

Shuckleborough would not have dared to take such a liberty as to use my name in any such transaction; and when I came back I released poor Habakkuk at once, gave him fresh credits, and never, to the day of his death, pressed him for a farthing. My books shew that I am a loser by him, to the amount of 5000*l.* and more. There are not many merchants in Liverpool, or anywhere else, Ozias, as you well know, who would have acted towards Habergam, or others in his situation, as I did. I mention this, not out of vainglory, or for the carnal seeking of men's praise. God forbid! But I have not yet so conquered the old man within me as not to feel it hard that what to others would be imputed as of merit, should be, in my case, set down as matter to

swell dark and degrading suspicion. I really thought I was not to have heard another word about the thing."

" It may not be so," said Ozias—" thou must hear more—much more. What thou hast said is well of sound; and for myself, I endeavoured to dismiss the charge from my thoughts, and resolved to keep it from passing my lips. What I endeavoured, I could not always do. What I resolved, I have done to the present hour. Now I must speak, and for thy sake, John, would that my tongue had any other office!"

He then detailed, in his own style, the story with which our readers are already familiar, and the manner in which he had obtained it. The beguiling of the drunken man from the place where he had taken up

his quarters for the night, by sending in the name of the pirate with whom he had in all probability sailed, to which an instant obedience was given—the ready recognition of the stranger as the person with whom he had identified Manesty—the reference to a quarrel in the morning—the assumption of drunkenness, which shewed that the whole character was assumed—his retreat into the corn-store—his personal appearance, middle age, grey hair, tall, stout figure, the scar on his forehead,—all seemed to point out the man. Manesty heard Ozias to the end attentively, but quite at ease.

“ Is this all?” he said, composedly, when the Moravian ceased to speak. “ Now, Rheinenberger, I should be ungrateful indeed if I did not feel infinitely obliged to

you for the trouble you have taken, and the interest you display. It may be fitting, too, that I should be on my guard against that bloodhound Oglethorpe, who does not value an oath at a straw. But is not this a very slight and silly collection of evidence? Are there no sailors of my size, and frame, and years, to be found in Liverpool? Is a scar on the brow, or a grizzled head, a thing to be wondered at? What is there remarkable in a man skulking into my open yard to sleep off, peradventure, his inebriety? And what reliance can be placed on the powers of observation of this butcher's boy, whom you describe as stupid and doltish? Had not the former piece of absurd slander reached your ears, you would not have applied any part of this pot-house conversation to me."

“Would that those ears had been closed with grave wax,” said Ozias, “before they had heard it! Would, too, that if others should hear it, thou wilt find an audience as unwilling of belief as I! But be it so. Be warned, nevertheless. ‘Vainly is the net spread in the sight of any bird.’ So let it be with thee.”

“I shall take sufficient care,” said Manesty. “Have you told me all?”

“All. Nay, I omitted to say that, as I followed Oglethorpe, I saw him enter thy corn-store, in the lane; and after prying all about, he took some of thy people into the next door alehouse, and gave them something to drink. I do not know what conversation he had with them, because I feared being discovered if I entered the house, the

master of which, though now among the most sinful of backsliders, was formerly one of the united brethren. I suspect, however, it was somewhat connected with the store, for as they returned one by one, I noticed that each pointed to a door and a window on the right-hand side."

"A door and a window?" asked Manesty, quickly. "What right-hand side?—as you go in from the lane?"

"Yes," said Ozias; "and even now, a quarter of an hour before I came to thee, I saw Oglethorpe meddling about the same door, and pushing at it, as if he desired to push it open."

"The devil he was!" said Manesty, rising in the extremest haste, and ringing the bell with so much violence as to snap

the rope. “I am damned, but *this* must be attended to!”

Paying no attention to the looks of Ozias, which were aghast in horror when he heard such unaccustomed sounds, Manesty ordered the servant, who was in immediate attendance, to send for Mr. Shuckleborough at once.

“Let him come,” said his impatient employer, “without delay, leaving off whatever he may be doing. Here is business indeed! I be ——”

“John,” said Ozias, “is this the language of a Christian?”

“Is it the language of the ——. Here, Robin,” said he, as Shuckleborough hurriedly entered, “go to the lane, and open Mr. H.’s door with this key; see that every-

thing is right there—that the padlocks of the chests are not disturbed, and that the door by the window is secure. There is a large picture against it. I have my reasons for wishing all things right there. And if you see Mr. Oglethorpe hovering round, turn him off the premises in any manner you think best; and take care to let our people about the corn-store know that I positively forbid them, on pain of immediate discharge, to hold the slightest communication with him, or anybody like him. Go at once, Robin. Go, man—go—go this moment!"

There was no need of a second bidding. Shuckleborough immediately departed, and Manesty and Rheinenberger were again alone.

"It is enough," said the Moravian,

mournfully. “I need no more. How is the faithful city become a harlot; it was full of judgment—righteousness lodged in it; but now ——” and he hesitated.

“Murderers!” said Manesty, fiercely; “finish the quotation from Isaiah without scruple. Why should you not speak what I see you think?”

“I cannot control my thoughts,” replied Ozias; “but I can control my speech. If my thoughts should be wrong, great would be my joy. But if I see not altogether astray, not to me will be left the final judgment, so far as anything on this earth can be called final; of the judgment above, it is presumptuous to think.”

“Cut the matter, then, short at once,” said Manesty, “and answer bluntly a blunt

question. Do you, or do you not, think that I murdered this young man, Blazes?"

"My thoughts," returned Rheinenberger, in a tremulous voice, "do lie that way. May the Lord ——"

"May the Lord give you something like common sense! Leave to me the task of justifying myself before a human tribunal, if brought to answer charges supported by evidence not sufficient to hang a dog. Were I, in reality, afraid of anything of the kind you hint at—why butchers' boys are neither incorruptible nor immortal."

A fearful thought flashed across the mind of Ozias. "More guilt," thought he—"more blood!" But the expression of his sentiments, if he meditated any, was broken off by the entrance of Shuckle-

borough, who had lost no time in executing so welcome a commission as that of bullying a bum.

“Here, sir,” said he, “is the key of Mr. H.’s room. God bless my heart, but I felt an all-overness when I went into it. It is near ten years since I was there before; and I looked to where the old gentleman used to sit for near thirty years, never missing a day except the Sabbath. I almost expected to see his little sharp, cunning face, peering through his shagreen rimmed spectacles over the books, and the everlasting shake of his silvery head. Ah! what a different head has the family of Hibblethwaite now; or rather, I should say tail, not head, for poor Dick has long been dragging through the mire.”

“Are the chests safe?” asked Manesty, who was by no means anxious to hear any more of his clerk’s reminiscences.

“Quite, sir,” replied Shuckleborough, “as safe as locks and padlocks can make them. They are good strong sea-chests, too. I do not remember that they used to be in the room in old Mr. H.’s time.”

“And the door by the window?”

“Bolted and double-bolted; locked and double-locked. ’Gad! it struck me, too, that I had not seen that door in former times. When was it ——”

Manesty, who had no intention of satisfying Shuckleborough’s curiosity by taking any notice of his fishing questions, merely asked him if he had seen Oglethorpe.

“Yes,” said the clerk, with much exul-

tation. “I saw the vagabond, sure enough, and he felt me; for I kicked him out of the yard.”

Shuckleborough did not hint that this act, which he certainly performed, was not a deed of a very desperate valour, as he had at his immediate command fifty stout draymen, and other aides-de-camp, who would have speedily reduced Oliver to a mummy, had he offered the slightest resistance to their *chef d'etat major*.

“He was pimping about the old door of the old lumber-house, which has not been opened, God knows when; and when I caught him, he was kicking at it with all his might, as if he had a wish to kick down the crazy old concern—and I do not think it would take much to do that. ‘So,’ says

I to him, ‘ Hallo! you fellow, Oglethorpe, what are you after? Aint you content to be a bum, without turning burglar as well. Kick for kick is fair play at football,’ says I; so I gave him one that he wont forget in a hurry.

“ Well, he talked a great deal of impertinence, and threatened an action; at which I snapped my fingers. ‘ An action for what?’ says I; ‘ for kicking off the premises a varmint I caught in the fact of trying to break open one of my master’s doors.’

“ ‘ Well,’ says he, with all the impudence in the world, ‘ maybe I wont demean myself to stoop to such rubbish as you—I’ll be after your master; and maybe, when next I come to break open that door, I’ll use the crowbar of the law.’

“ ‘I tell you what, my man,’ says I, ‘do you see that sack of corn weighing up to the top-loft of the store?—now, when it comes down again, if I find your ugly face about the yard, I’ll take care that it will not return the next time loaded with a sack of corn, which is a good and valuable thing for beast and man, but with the dirty carcase of Mr. Oliver Oglethorpe, which is neither good for man nor beast—and that will give him a taste of what dangling on a rope is, to season him against he comes to the gallows.’

“ ‘If you talk of the gallows,’ says he, ‘you had better look nearer home.’

“ So I could not bear this any longer; and I beckoned to Geordie o’ Bobs—they call him Greesly Geordie in the yard. And

he came running up at once; and when Oglethorpe saw him stretching out his arms to catch and hoist him, which he would have done as easy as a cat would shake a mouse, he sheered off in a minute. But the vagabond did keep lurking about, nevertheless, whatever he wanted; because I met him just this minute, and he said he had seen me through Mr. H.'s window, and that he knew what brought me there, and he would be soon there after me. I cannot make out what the blackguard means."

"It is of very little consequence," said Manesty, who had been thoughtfully silent during his head clerk's rigmarole narrative. "You have done what I wished, and you may now look after the business of the office."

Ozias also had preserved a profound silence, but his thoughts lay in a far different direction from those of his companion. When Shuckleborough had left the room, he lost not a moment in speaking.

“My soul,” said he, “had been communing, John, with the Lord; and I have wrestled with him for thee in silent prayer. If thy hand in the death of this young man —nay, keep thy temper, O my brother! I am not thy judge, nor am I to set myself in the seat of the accuser—I speak to thee as if thou wert my brother indeed, the son of mine own mother. Seest thou not in what a net thou art enmeshed—a net hard to unwind from, if thine innocence were as spotless as are the wings of a dove—and to that (which will, I plainly see, soon be thy

most pressing temporal concern) thou must heedfully look. In that, I doubt not, thou art better of counsel than I ; perhaps, however, one less interested than thyself might more coolly advise—but be it so. But, John, in my silence, sad visions came over my thoughts of what is of deeper import than the judgment, just or unjust, the vengeance, swift or slow-footed, of man—sad visions came over my thoughts of thy soul's estate. Shake this world from off thy heart, on which it sits with so heavy a weight; and if bloodguiltiness——”

“ Nay, Ozias,” said Manesty, “ I have heard all this before, and have no need of turning my counting-house into a conventicle. If I were to reply to thee in the same strain of canting rubbish, have I not

an answer ready at hand? Are you not a predestinarian? Do you not know that all my course of life, and all thy course of life —the course of life of all the sons and daughters of man, was laid down from the beginning of things; that we are strictly bound children of what the pagans called Fate, or Necessity, or, as our Scriptures figuratively express the same doctrine, by saying that we are vessels of clay in the hands of the potter? Is not this the faith held by your founder, Zinzendorf, and testified to in all the churches of the Unitas Fratrum?"

"It is sad to hear these sacred things profaned to such uses," said Ozias, with a sigh. "The holy Count pryed not into the secrets of the Lord, and did not pretend

that he was in his councils; neither does the church in which thou wast reared—that which is called of England. Wisely does its seventeenth article caution men against the over-curious consideration of such subjects; and too truly does it predict that it will lead the carnal-minded to despair, or recklessness of living. Hath it not done so with thee?"

"I rather think not," said Manesty, with a sneer. "My manner of life is orderly and decorous, and it will take some spell more potent than anything which nurse or priest has taught, to drive me to despair. Nay, one of the most gifted of the preachers, even he who is known by the name of Ami-nadab the Ancient, assured me that I was one of the elect; and that, therefore, being

in a state of grace from which I could not fall, I never could lapse into sin; or that if I did, salvation was rather the surer, as God would thereby be able to manifest the absoluteness of his power in raising a sinner to glory."

Tears stood in the eyes of the deeply-shocked Moravian.

"Thou art lost," he said, mournfully; "thou art lost, O my brother! Sooner would I have heard from thy lips the oaths and execrations which they lately uttered than this. They are a lesser profanation; but this is hopeless indeed. That Aminadab well knoweth the letter of the Scriptures, is true—the spirit of the Scriptures, I fear me, hath never been vouchsafed unto him. And that I have often heard him powerful

in prayer, and eloquent in exhortation, is also true. But the power of his prayers is that of fear, not love; he looks in the face of the Almighty to find there frowns, not smiles; and his eloquence is that of rage and threatenings, as if he were the blood-dipped headsman of an avenging, not the white-robed minister of a comforting God; as if it were his mission to dispense the wine of the wrath of the Lord, not those contents of that blessed cup which were shed for the salvation of all. Poor worm! and is it he who can sit as a judge upon election and reprobation? Is his the right hand on which he is to range the sheep, and the left hand for the goats? How knoweth he that thou art elect? From what storehouse doth he draw out indul-

gences for sin? Weak is the reed on which thou leanest. Alas! my brother, the enemy hath hold of thee, and thou art lost indeed!"

" So be it, then," said Manesty, rising impatiently; " there has been quite enough of this twaddle of theology for one morning. Have you anything further to say to me?"

" Very little. I came in peace, and I part in peace; and words of reproach thou wilt never hear from me. What has passed in this chamber this morning will never escape my lips. My suspicions or surmises may be groundless, but I thought it fitting to tell thee what might be of great concernment. Come what will, my power is weak, but such as it is, be it at thy command here and elsewhere. If it were meet that thou

shouldst wander abroad, and abandon the pursuits of commerce—nay, be not impatient—I can place thee with a godly brotherhood in Connecticut, where, remote from temptation and annoyance, thy life may glide smoothly away in penitence (and the best among us hath many a stain upon his soul) and in usefulness, among pious prayers, and the sweet harmonies of peace-inspiring hymns. May God be thy guide! I shall never forget whose was the hand, which, when I staggered on the brink of ruin, saved me from the precipice; nor, when my wife and children all but wanted bread, whose was the hand by which it was supplied. Fare-thee-well."

" I suppose," said Manesty, stepping after him with unruffled brow into the outer

office—" I suppose, Rheinenberger, we shall meet, by and by, on 'Change?'"

But the Moravian answered him not, and departed.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE CONFESSION.

MANESTY speedily returned to his room, there to ruminate alone on what he had heard. Strange to say, his first impulse was to laugh aloud.

“ Poor Ozias, how he must have been shocked ! The killing of Blazes was of course, in his eyes, matter of less enormity than the old seaman habit of rapping out an oath, which I could not repress myself

from using on the instant. Far less were all the enormities of Hoskins than the scoffs, which even he must have perceived I was flinging upon the dearest gods of his idolatry. I feel myself relieved of a load, as was the Sailor Sinbad, when he flung off from his shoulders the galling oppression of the Old Man of the Sea. It was to come sooner or later, and I am glad that I have broken the ice with Rheinenberger. Why should I tie myself down to this wearying life of dull drudgery—this sickening and hypocritical assumption of a character for which, perhaps, there never was any need; but for which there is now assuredly none whatever. I shall put an end to it to-day. This prying impertinence of Oglethorpe is beyond doubt, a *contretemps*, which just now I

should wish had not occurred. Pish! what matter—it is a twenty or a fifty pound affair at most to smother. It will soon stench itself out. If anything be annoying in the investigations, which may arise, I can easily retire for a moment. A week ago, I announced on 'Change that I was again bound, at this my usual time, for the West Indies;—when I return, who will think of this folly. When I return! Is that ever to be? Perhaps not. Sometimes I am weak enough to believe that omens and portents are gathering round me, and that my career is coming to its close. And a face haunts me with a look of puzzling remembrance. Is it because I—pooh! was that the only one?"

He "pished," and "poohed," with much

vehemence; but did not seem by such means to recover his equanimity.

“ It is all nonsense,” said he, at last; “ I have business of more moment to attend to. I must go to old Hibb lethwaite’s room, and see if there is anything there that ought to be put away. Shuckleborough,” said he, emerging from his private room, and putting on his coat, “ go to Weston, and tell my attorney, Varnham, to wait for me at home all day—the hour of my calling on him will be uncertain; but let him be in the way, whatever it may be.”

He left the counting-house, and Robin never saw him more! He was fond of telling, in the few remaining years of his life, that he had never before noticed Master John so much elated—that his figure seemed

to swell—his tall height to be drawn to its uttermost—his voice as it were to chuckle with delight—and his eyes to gleam with a fiery lustre that almost frightened his obsequious dependent. He strode out of the office gaily and flauntingly, and something like the humming of an air burst upon Shuckleborough's astonished ear. “In after days,” he said, “he thought him possessed, and that it boded some ill,” adducing various *ad libitum* dreams, and other indications of coming evil. At the time, if the truth were to be told, he thought that Rheinenberger had communicated to “the governor” some tidings of good fortune, which was to be duly ratified and confirmed by his friend Ezekiel Varnham, whom he complimented in thought as one of the sharpest

hands in the duchy, and justly complimented, too, if the words, “sharp hand,” be synonymous with “unscrupulous rogue.”

When Manesty gained the room which was known by the name of his late partner, he carefully locked himself in, and proceeded to open and scrupulously examine the chests. He had ascertained beforehand that the door, which, in fact, did lead to the lumber-room below, was secure. He felt certain that no intruder could break in upon his privacy, and he bestowed much time, care, and patience upon the task of examination and selection, which seemed to be in his eyes a matter of all-absorbing interest.

While he was thus occupied, a loud and impetuous knocking was heard at the front door of the room, to which at first he paid

no attention whatever, but proceeded silently on his business. It was, however, more vehemently repeated; and on his continuing not to answer, the voice of his nephew, tremulous with emotion, reached his ear.

“It is no use, uncle,” said Hugh; “I know you are in the room, and I must, and will see you.”

“I am much occupied now, Hugh,” was the answer, “and do not want to be intruded upon. In less than an hour, I shall be at the house in Pool-lane; and then I am at your service.”

“But it is now—now, this moment, sir, that I want you,” said Hugh, in frantic accents, speaking through the door—“a moment is not to be lost—it is matter of life and death.”

“Humph!” muttered Manesty, hastily gathering up the articles he had taken from the chests, replacing them with hurried hand, and again securing them under their padlocks. “Some love-caper about the Stanleys, I presume; but the sooner I admit him, the sooner I get rid of him.—Wait a moment, Hugh, I shall open the door at once.”

He was as good as his word; and on the instant that the barrier was removed, Hugh bounded into the apartment. Some unusual feeling had distorted his tranquil features into the mingled emotions of bursting rage and scarcely suppressed grief; and, with an abruptness which he had never before ventured to assume towards his stern relation, he rushed into the question at once, which had driven him to invade his uncle’s privacy.

“Sir,” said he, “I am about to commit what I know is a crime by the laws of man, and a sin by the ordinances of God; but I must do it—I cannot draw back.”

“I may as well relock the door,” said Manesty, “if you intend carrying on a conversation which promises to be so ticklish, in such a voice.” He did so, accordingly, casting a scrutinizing glance upon his nephew, strongly indicative that he considered the young man’s sanity rather doubtful.

“It is no need, sir,” said Hugh; “for the affair is, or at least speedily will be, known all over Liverpool and Lancashire. I have challenged Colonel Stanley to a duel, and we are to meet in an hour’s time, or rather less, by Wavertree.”

“It is, indeed, most sinful and absurd,” said Manesty; “but why——”

“I have no time, sir, to listen to truism which I could utter without prompting. It must be, and there’s an end. The quarrel is this—I came up with the Stanleys this morning from Eaglemont, a couple of hours ago, and we stopped at her cousin’s house, by the new gardens of Toxteth Park. The colonel does not like me or mine, and he has insinuated many an underhand insult, which I pretended not to notice, because—no matter why. It is no time for concealment now, uncle; but there is everything but a solemn engagement of marriage between Mary Stanley and me——”

“Speak not of that,” said his uncle; “I have long known it, and seriously thought

about it. Of that hereafter. What about Colonel Stanley? The young man is deeply embarrassed, and it may be that I know where he applied for unreasonable assistance.

“ He left us, then, in Toxteth Park, and in an hour or thereabouts, returned much chafed at something I know not what. I had remained with the young lady, and he rushed into the room, and without regarding her presence, directed the most injurious language towards me. He said that he had found out the secret of the wealth of our house—that it was all the produce of piracy and murder—that you were nothing more than a notorious pirate, who took advantage of your ill-gotten wealth to insult highborn men to whom you ought not to aspire to be

a footman, by casting discredit on their honour; and that there could be no doubt that you flung the sailor into the river to get rid of his testimony."

"And then?"

"And then Miss Stanley, whose ears not even a rumour of these slanders had reached, looked at me, and frightened by my angry looks, I suppose, immediately fainted. I rang for her servant to take care of her, and called him out into the lawn, where I dared him to repeat his words, which he did with many aggravations of insult. I instantly told him he lied, and he struck me. In the affray that followed I had not the worse; and he was nearly overpowered when the servants parted us. But still I have received outrageous affront actually in the

presence, and a blow almost in the presence, certainly with the knowledge, of a lady——”

“ Whom it seems you love more than common sense or common reason. Could you not read the riddle of all this? George Stanley has been of late more than usually unlucky, as these silly fellows call themselves, when they run open-mouthed to be robbed at the betting-stand or gaming-board; and I know that he was vainly endeavouring to negotiate some desperate discounts with my broker, Shackleford, which were peremptorily declined to-day, and he connects me, somehow, with the refusal. The blow, however, *is* bad. But have not you employed our sturdy old Lancashire method of wiping it out already by vigorously using those arms which nature has bestowed?”

“ I did my best in that way,” replied the nephew; “ but it is not the fit method after all. And as the colonel is, beyond question, a first-rate shot, and a capital swordsman, I cannot with any honour refuse to follow up the challenge. Why I came to you, dear uncle, is this. Duels are not always fatal, and explanations often bring them to a bloodless conclusion. I thirst not for the blood of George Stanley—call a dog by that name, and I should love it—and shall be found ready to listen to anything pacific that will not compromise my character as a gentleman. What terms shall I impose to make him retract the injurious words—the abominable insinuations, he addressed towards you? The insult to myself I can have no difficulty in arranging.”

“ You think, then,” said Manesty, looking full in the young man’s face, “ that duelling is criminal and sinful, and only to be justified, or rather to be palliated, by supposed necessities of each individual case?”

“ Such is my opinion,” replied Hugh.

“ The justice of the individual case ought, then,” said his uncle, slowly, “ to be a principal element in deciding on what is to be adduced as palliation or defence?”

“ Undoubtedly.”

“ It is but a shadow of the trial by combat, in the middle ages,” continued Manesty; “ and even in those dark and barbarous days they supposed that it was necessary to have truth on the side of him who claimed the wager of battle. Should it not be so still?”

“ Of course. I am not so superstitious as to imagine, that in the old judicial combats death proved guilt or false accusation against the defeated champion—or victory vindicated the innocence of the conqueror, or established the justice of his charge. In modern duels, we do little more than risk a life to comply with the *étiquette* exacted by the world; but still it is infinitely disgraceful to maintain a quarrel in any manner, unless you imagine you have right on your side. In the case of a fatal result, under contrary circumstances, I should little envy the feelings of the survivor. It would be hard to distinguish his act from a murder.”

“ Which the law calls it in any case. Hugh—I wish you not to fight this duel—I never could worse spare you than now.

You know not the projects I have in my mind, nor the variety of struggles I have made for your advancement in the world—for realizing your most cherished hopes—ay, even that which is now most busily throbbing in your heart.”

“ But, uncle, I cannot avoid it,” said the young man, passionately. “ I might submit to an affront directed against myself——”

“ I doubt it much,” thought his uncle.

“ But when it is directed against you—you, by whom my unprotected infancy was reared and cherished—who have loaded me with kindness, and heaped me with favours—made me,—me, a poor deserted orphan, with no claims upon you but such as would be neglected by nine men out of ten,—a

participator in your hard-earned wealth, the fruit of your own toil and talent, your patience, and your self-denial—and such an affront, too—why, sir, I should have kennel-water, not blood in my veins, if I did not resent it!"

Manesty looked on the handsome and excited youth with glistening, but not undelightened eyes, as he poured out these energetic words. Some busy feelings appeared to be at work in his bosom; but he was silent. Hugh thought he had gained an advantage; and as his uncle did not speak, he proceeded, after a short pause.

" And offered, too, in the presence of a lady—to be dishonoured in whose eyes is to me a worse agony than death—I cannot, uncle—it must go on."

“ It may be in many ways prevented,” said Manesty, “ without dishonour to either party. As for me, the words of such a bullying swindler as yon broken blackleg pass by me as the idle wind. What he has said affects me not. I can protect myself from his slanders, if I deem it necessary, in a way that he will consider more serious than the pulling of a score of triggers. Take, therefore, no heed for me. You have spoken affectionately of my care, dear Hugh. May not the man, of whom you have thus spoken, demand that a proof of your affection should be shewn? If I have been a protector of your childhood, let me be a protector of your manhood. You have told me that George Stanley is a keen shot,—of that I do not much reck; for I have known that keen

shots have not unfrequently missed when the object before the pistolled poltroon is not a pistolless partridge. So much for me. As for the lady, may I not ask you, is not she trembling this very moment?—would she not give all that is dearest to her to prevent this affair from coming to blood? The man to whom you profess deep obligation—the woman to whom you are linked, in what you imagine endless love—both equally acquit you of all obligation. Fight not this duel, dear Hugh—leave it to me, and, if you like, to Miss Stanley, with me to arrange. Fear not any disgrace from the result. I know, as you have said, that George Stanley is master of any weapon, which he will employ, and that he will unscrupulously use his skill. And to lose

you now—oh, God! If we were in—but no matter. I peremptorily forbid this duel."

"It is not in your power, uncle," replied Hugh—"your peremptoriness comes too late. You, then, will not tell me what I can say to the colonel, beyond a flat denial of his insolent slander."

"Stay," returned Manesty; "*it is* in my power to stop you, and that effectually. But before I do it, pause for a moment, and take my word for it, without inquiry, that you will find I am right in saying I have such power. One short sentence of mine checks this insane quarrel. Do not urge me to speak it—take my word that I can do what I say."

"I cannot, dear uncle,—I cannot! The

time is rapidly approaching, and I must be punctual to the minute."

" You compel me, then, to speak," said Manesty, " that which you will sadly repent ever having heard. Suppose what Colonel Stanley said was perfectly true?"

" Is true? Impossible! Do not I, who have dwelt under your roof—know it to be impossible?" cried the young man, turning deadly pale, nevertheless, and sinking upon one of the sea-chests which stood by the office-desk. " Good God! do you mean to say that you are connected with slavers and pirates?"

" The contents of that chest, on which you are sitting, would supply you with ample information on that point. I AM."

" A fearful suspicion has sometimes come

over my thoughts," replied Hugh, " when I found our profits so unaccountably increasing, but nothing of this. Am I, then, to have the misery of being obliged to ask — if you are in any way identified with that desperate, who is called Dick Hoskins?"

" Identified, indeed!" was the stern and dogged answer — " for I AM THE MAN!"

" Gracious heavens! and the sailor Blazes——"

" Was flung into the river Mersey, by this hand!" said Manesty, with perfect composure. " Nay, bury not your face in your hands, but gather up your senses, while I proceed in the work, which you disturbed; and when you have again scraped them together, it will be time for you to

think of pursuing this duel, with all its honourable accompaniments."

Hugh sank into something like a swoon; but soon recovered; and found his uncle quietly writing at his desk.

"Is this mockery or truth?" he gasped forth, in tones which agony had rendered almost inarticulate.

"Truth!" returned Manesty. "I have commanded the 'Bloody Juno,' for the last three years, personally, as I had done five-and-twenty years ago. I commanded it by proxy during all the years of the interval."

"And the dreadful stories—the burning of the Spaniards alive in the Podestà?"

"Was an accident—we never intended it."

“ And the killing of the boat’s crew, off the coast of Brazil ?”

“ Was no accident ; but they richly deserved it. There was not a man among them that did not deserve to be hanged ten times over.”

“ And the——”

“ Do not frighten yourself by pursuing the catalogue. Many things, quite as bad as these, were done ; though the worst matters were done when Tristram Fiennes commanded, and his life was the forfeit. His crew, tired of his cruelty, murdered him off Anamaboo, three years ago, when, as nobody could be trusted to manage a body of desperadoes in the mutinous state which followed this affair, I was obliged to go myself. The business of Brooklyn Royal was a mere

flam—I sold it out and out, on my first trip across the Atlantic, and never set foot in Jamaica again."

Hugh was so stupefied, that he scarcely heard what his uncle was saying; but he well recollected the name of Tristram Fiennes, and the letter which announced his death—its agitating effect on Manesty—and his hasty departure for the West Indies so speedily following.

"Good heavens!" said he, at last, starting up, "am I doomed to have such a demon for an uncle!"

"Does it grieve you, then, that I am your uncle? If you knew the truth, that cause of grief would be removed. It has been an imposture, on my part, all through. I am *not* your uncle."

The eyes of the young man were instantly flashing with beams of joy.

“ You are not my uncle, thou blood-stained man! Your deeds towards me have been such that I can never meditate harm towards you. But, oh! what a weight you have taken off my heart! God be praised, I am not of your kin. You are, then, not my uncle? Say it again.”

“ I will,” said Manesty, laying his hand upon the youth’s shoulder, who recoiled with horror from the touch. “ The truth must come at last—I am *not* your uncle—I *am* your father!”

“ My father!” exclaimed the frantic young man—“ my father! Oh, God! Here, then, I part with this accursed house and its

dreadful owner for ever. Is this only a horrid dream?"

"Not so easily parted as you imagine," said Manesty, with perfect coolness. "You will not kick down that iron door; those who put up its bolts and stanchions wrought it not so as to be spurned down with naked fist or foot. Stay but for a moment. You will find full particulars of my career, and your own history in this paper. Put it in your pocket; and having read it, think whether you are to meet George Stanley or not. I knew that the religious rubbish I broached was nothing but despicable nonsense; but I knew well that I could prevent the duel by a word. Will you meet him now?"

"Open the door, sir, and that's all—

all!" exclaimed Hugh. "Let me loose from this den of horrors. George Stanley is safe from me."

"I thought so. Of other matters, we'll talk when you are in calmer mood," said his father, for so we must now call him, opening the door, through which his son rushed, in headlong desperation.

"I must look ahead, in good earnest," said Manesty, returning to his desk, after he had locked the door. "The game will soon be up; but I shall take care of him, nevertheless."

CHAPTER XX.

IN WHICH A NEW CHARACTER APPEARS
ON THE SCENE.

IT has been seen that Mary Stanley fainted, and was consigned to the care of her servant, on witnessing her cousin's insulting conduct to Hugh, and the anger it excited in the young merchant. She soon, however, recovered her consciousness, and with it returned also the energy of her character. Though her knowledge of the world, like

that of most other young women, was but limited, she knew enough to be convinced that such a quarrel as had taken place between Colonel Stanley and young Manesty could have only one termination, the bare apprehension of which filled her with intolerable dread, strengthened by a knowledge that Hugh had abruptly left the Colonel's house in great excitement. But to this terror she would not yield. Nothing could be gained by inaction. If it were possible to avert the danger, not a moment was to be lost — no effort to be neglected.

But to whom should she apply? Her father had been present during the outrage perpetrated by Colonel Stanley, and must still be in the house. She would send for

him, and engage his offices in preventing any fatal catastrophe; for though she was aware of his punctilious disposition in what the world agrees to call “affairs of honour,” she doubted not that her tears would move him to an effectual interposition.

Thinking thus, she sent to beg Sir Hildebrand would come to her immediately. On the servant’s return, she learned that the baronet had left the house a quarter of an hour previously.

This, at first, seemed like a confirmation of her worst fear, and a sad tremour of the heart came over her. She laboured under a sickening and agonizing idea of the sudden transition from life, and youth, and

strength, and the warm gush of the blood, and the vigorous bounding of the pulse, to violent extinction. Bitterly would she have deplored such an awful termination to her cousin's career, but at this moment she thought not of him. Her mind was full of "strange images of death," all of which were connected with Hugh Manesty, and with him alone. She beheld him stretched on the sward, with glazed eyes and blood-stained garments, or writhing in intolerable pangs, which nothing but the termination of life could calm—he, with whom that very morning she had held pleasant discourse, brightened by anticipations of coming years of happiness.

After the first access of these tortures, she grew a little more calm, especially

when the blessed thought crossed her, that perhaps Sir Hildebrand had gone to Liverpool to lay an information before the magistrates, with a view of placing both parties under arrest. Such an act, she thought, would be worthy of his age, and of his duty as uncle of Colonel Stanley, to say nothing of the regard he had always manifested for Hugh.

“Is Colonel Stanley still in the house?” she inquired of a servant.

“Yes, madam; he is writing in the library.”

“God be praised!” ejaculated Mary. “Then all may yet be well. My father is gone to Liverpool, you say? Did he see the colonel previously? I mean, had they any conversation together?”

“ I should imagine so, madam,” was the reply; “ they had been some time shut up in the library.”

On hearing this, Mary Stanley’s agony returned upon her tenfold. She perceived at once that it was not likely her cousin would remain in his house, if he did not feel certain that Sir Hildebrand had not departed on an errand of prevention. What was to be done? Whom could she consult? She knew not where, on the instant, to find her friend and relative, the old earl; and she had no acquaintance in so mercantile a place as Liverpool. What was to be done? To remain passively in Colonel Stanley’s house, she felt was impossible. Yet where could she go with any hope of averting the evil she dreaded?

So great was her bewilderment, and so torturing her state of suspense, that Miss Stanley had not perceived the entrance of a third person. At length, looking around, her eyes met those of an elderly lady, who gazed at her attentively.

“ Dear Mrs. Yarington !” exclaimed Mary. “ How strange it is that I should not have thought of sending for you ! You, who came here this morning with us ! Of course, you have been apprized of all that has happened an hour or two ago between young Mr. Manesty and Colonel Stanley ? I am terrified on thinking of the probable consequences. For Heaven’s sake, dear Mrs. Yarington, tell me what steps I can take to prevent them.”

Mrs. Yarington was a widow, rather

past middle age. On the death of Lady Stanley, she had been recommended to Sir Hildebrand as a gentlewoman capable of superintending his household, and acting in the place of mother to his daughter. For these duties, indeed, no one could have been better calculated than Mrs. Yarington, who was evidently a person of perfect refinement, education, and knowledge of society. But her disposition being reserved, with a slight tincture of haughtiness, she rarely appeared when visitors were at Eaglemont, and was more than usually secluded whenever Hugh came to the house. This may account for her not having, till now, figured in this veritable history.

“I have heard, my dear,” said Mrs. Yarington, “of the *fracas* between your

cousin and the young merchant; and I participate in your fears as to the result."

"What, then, can we do to prevent it?" asked Mary, looking anxiously into the face of her companion.

"Nothing," coldly replied Mrs. Yarington. "The time for interference has passed, if, indeed, interference with such hot-brained young men would ever have been practicable. From what I overheard your father say, when he passed out of Colonel Stanley's library, I am convinced his errand was to find what duellists call 'a friend,' meaning 'a second' for the encounter. I am truly grieved, dear Miss Stanley, that I can give you no better comfort."

"And is it possible," ejaculated the poor

girl, "that my father can have so hard a heart as to encourage this savage affair?"

"Heart!" echoed Mrs. Yarington. "Heart! Men of *honour* have no hearts. With them, pride tramples down humanity. Father, mother, sisters, wife, and children, are all sacrificed to the nonsense of a supposed necessity; or, in other words, to the idol, self."

"Heaven forgive them for the miseries they inflict!" exclaimed Mary.

"So I pray," returned the widow. "That these two young men will meet, I have not the slightest doubt. The colonel is rash and vindictive; and as to Hugh," she continued, drawing herself up proudly, "The blood in his veins is as good as Stan-

ley's; and nothing on earth will tempt him to brook an insult, except he should deem himself to be in the wrong. I know the cause of the quarrel. Poor Hugh, perhaps, *may* be in an error; but of this, I see not how he is to be convinced."

These words were even as a riddle to Miss Stanley. Her father, indeed, was not altogether ignorant of the genealogy of young Manesty; but it did not suit him to communicate what he knew to his daughter.

Mary was surprised at what had fallen from Mrs. Yarington. She looked inquiringly into her face, saying, "Your words perplex me. What do you know of Hugh, whom you have scarcely ever seen until this morning, though now you hint at some

mystery connected with his life? Tell me, I beseech you!"

"Not now—not now," hurriedly replied Mrs. Yarington. "A time may come when what I have to say may more fitly be heard. Meanwhile, restrain your impatience."

"I will try to do so," cried Miss Stanley; "but I cannot control my fear. Let us endeavour, dearest Mrs. Yarington, to prevent this dreadful encounter. Come with me to Liverpool. Something may yet be done."

"Our efforts would be unavailing," returned the widow. "Colonel Stanley is no longer in this house. He rode out at the gate just as I came to you. Young Manesty will be punctual in such an affair. The

colonel, I doubt not, will find him already in the field."

"But," gasped Mary, "could we not go at once to the merchant himself? He has great influence with the authorities in Liverpool; and if parties of constables were sent in different directions, the thing may yet be stopped. Let us go to the merchant."

"What!" exclaimed Mrs. Yarington, with a shudder. "To John Manesty? Not for worlds would I stand one instant in the presence of that man! Come, Miss Stanley, this is no house for us. It is fit that we return to Eaglemont."

With these words she conducted the despairing and bewildered girl to her carriage. To one less heart-stricken than Mary Stan-

ley, the beauty of the day was capable of inspiring thoughts of happiness. “The all-beholding sun” cast broad beams of light against the carriage-windows; and, as the branches of those trees which here and there studded the road, moved in a soft western wind, their dancing leaves reflected merrily, like diminutive mirrors of green glass, the glow that fell upon them. Alas, all this radiance was as a mockery to Mary Stanley! In the morning, seated by Hugh’s side, she had revelled in the sunny glory: *now* it came as an impertinent contrast to the dark wretchedness of her thoughts. She closed her eyes, not being able to endure “the insolent light.” Mrs. Yarrington did not offer to the poor girl a single syllable of consolation; but, in per-

fect silence and abstraction, leaned back in the carriage as if she were its only occupant.

In this way, the companions returned to Sir Hildebrand Stanley's mansion.

CHAPTER XXI.

HUGH MANESTY'S SUBMISSION, AND ITS
CONSEQUENCES.

THE hour appointed for the meeting between Colonel Stanley and Hugh had now arrived; and the former, attended by one of the officers of his regiment, Captain Brooksbank, was already on the ground near Wavertree.

“It is five minutes past the stated hour,” said Stanley, looking at his watch; “and

yet this counting-house cur does not appear. By Jove! if he makes a fool of me, I'll horse-whip him on 'Change before his brother-merchants, even if I should have a dozen creditors among the bystanders."

"We'll give him a quarter of an hour," said Brooksbank; "and then should he not come, you'll be justified in visiting him with any degradation you think fit."

"Curse the fellow!" ejaculated the colonel. "I thought he had some pluck in him. At any rate, it looked like it, Brooksbank, when he ventured to challenge *me*."

"He may yet come up to the scratch," returned the captain. "And see, somebody is advancing this way. He can't be our man, though, for he is alone."

“A shuffling hound!” cried Stanley.

By this time, the features of the newcomer could be seen. He was a stranger, and looked like a porter or messenger. On approaching the two friends, the man touched his hat, and inquired if either of them was Colonel Stanley.

“We do not choose to answer that question,” replied Brooksbank. “Why do you ask it?”

“Because,” replied the man, unhesitatingly, “I have a letter for that gentleman, which I am to deliver into his own hands. I was told that I should find him and another gentleman waiting hereabouts.”

“And from whom is the letter,—eh, my man?” demanded the captain.

“From Mr. Hugh Manesty,” was the reply.

Brooksbank, whom long experience in these matters had rendered suspicious, at first imagined this to be a feint to identify the colonel and himself, in order that they might be taken into custody for conspiring to break the peace. He cast his eyes around him in every direction, and, seeing no other person lurking about, he said to Stanley, “I think we may trust this fellow. It’s no trap. Take the letter, and let’s see what the sneaking rascal has to say for himself.”

“Give me the letter, my man,” said Colonel Stanley. “I am the gentleman to whom it is directed.”

The messenger delivered his missive, and

returned quietly towards the town. When he was out of sight, Stanley broke the seal, and read as follows to Brooksbank:—

“ Liverpool Arms, Wednesday noon.

“SIR,—I write to you under circumstances of deep humiliation. Though the challenger, I am not in a position to meet you on the matter as it stands. Circumstances have occurred which convince me that the grounds of our quarrel, as far as it has hitherto proceeded, do not warrant me in exposing my own life, or in placing yours in peril. Without justice on one’s side, or what one believes to be justice, the going out to fight a duel is little better than an attempt to murder, and this I cannot—will not—do. This explanation is

not likely to satisfy you; but I can offer no other. For having given you the lie, an apology on my part would be superfluous, as you neutralized the indignity by a blow.

“ Any further communication you may desire to make to me, must be addressed *here*. It may be long before I am again found at the house of Mr. Manesty. An affair of some moment will keep me away till the evening; but this is of less consequence, as the moon is at present at the full. I pledge myself to attend to any meeting you may appoint, and remain

“ Your obedient servant,

“ HUGH MANESTY.”

“ To Colonel Stanley.”

“A queer letter, Brooksbank,” said the colonel—“a strange mixture of submission and defiance. What does the fellow mean by the quarrel, *as far as it has hitherto proceeded?* The coolness of his insolence provokes me. Then, don’t you observe, he tempts me to further hostilities; and hints at the convenience of moonlight. What do you think, Brooksbank?”

“Think!” retorted the other. “Why, the thing is as plain as this pistol-case; you must call him out; he provokes it.”

“And I *will* do so, by ——!” returned the colonel, as a thought of his cousin Mary crossed his mind and inflamed his resentment.

With this view, Stanley and Brooksbank returned to Toxteth Park, there to prepare a message to young Manesty.

Poor Hugh ! the toils are closing fast about thee. Deadly defiance on one hand, and black disgrace to thy relative on the other.

CHAPTER XXII.

HUGH AND MARY—THE EARL OF SILVERSTICK IS
EXHIBITED IN A NEW LIGHT.

IN his last interview with Manesty, Hugh was so bewildered, so shocked, so humiliated, and so indignant at the revelations then made as to the identity of the merchant with Dick Hoskins, the pirate, and the positive declaration that this blood-stained man was his own father, that, heedless of the manuscript offered him, he had rushed in a frantic state

from the presence of his parent, leaving the papers untouched on the table. He was too much engrossed by the astounding disclosure to think of anything but an eternal separation from him to whom, since early youth, he had looked up as his guide and protector, as well as the founder of his fortune. All was now over. Hugh could no longer participate in wealth amassed by such means as piracy and the infamous capture and traffic in human beings. He was now a beggar—a stray weed on the surface of society. He must begin the world again. Liverpool was closed against him; he could no more shew his face there. London was the only place which offered any chance of success, and thither he would repair as quickly as possible.

But this step he could not take till he had settled two important and pressing affairs,—namely, his quarrel with Colonel Stanley, and his engagement with Mary, from each of which he felt it was incumbent on him to retreat; and he made up his mind manfully to avoid both; *manfully*, because to go into the field against Stanley on the existing dispute would be to assume false colours, which he abhorred; and to prolong his intercourse with Miss Stanley would be equally unjustifiable under his new circumstances.

Determining never again to enter Manesty's house, Hugh took up a brief residence at a tavern called the Liverpool Arms, where he wrote to Colonel Stanley, as before related. If this letter breathed in

some of its expressions a haughty and defying spirit, some allowance should be made for the tortured feelings of a young man, whose expectations of wealth and honour and dreams of love had that very morning been destroyed. In a high-minded person, poverty, more than opulence, is the parent of pride.

Having despatched his letter to Stanley, Hugh prepared for an explanation far more harrowing than any event which could by possibility ensue between him and the colonel. The time in his own power was but brief, for he had bound himself to Stanley to be at the Liverpool Arms in the evening. Without delay, therefore, he repaired to Eaglemont. Luckily, Sir Hildebrand was from home when he arrived, so

that Hugh was at once ushered into the presence of Miss Stanley, who was alone.

“ Dear Hugh !” exclaimed the poor girl, starting up as he entered the room, and holding out to him both her hands—“ dear Hugh, what a weight of misery has your appearance lifted from my heart ! Thank Heaven, you are safe !—and George,” continued she, with a shudder, “ George, I fervently hope, is not hurt.”

“ Colonel Stanley and I have not met,” replied Hugh. “ I withdrew my challenge, because, although your cousin might have been rash and unfeeling in uttering what he did in your presence, I have since undergone the bitter mortification of learning that his words were not altogether erroneous.”

“ You have acted nobly, Hugh.”

“ I know not,” he returned. “ At any rate, I am conscious that I have acted justly. And now, Mary,” he continued, in a trembling and mournful voice, and looking earnestly upon her, “ do not be offended—but, above all, do not be grieved—if I say I am come here to bid you farewell for ever!”

Mary turned as pale as death, and could only just articulate—“ What mean you, Hugh?”

“ This,” returned young Manesty. “ You see before you a ruined, a despairing, a broken-hearted man—one who must never more enter your house—one to whom the consolation even of this last adieu would, in all probability, have been denied, had not your father been absent!”

“ What has happened ?” gasped Miss Stanley. “ O tell me what has happened ! —tell me at once ! I can bear anything but this torturing suspense. I will not believe that disgrace can attach itself to Hugh Manesty !”

“ Thank you, Mary—thank you, from the depths of my heart. I am not, in myself, disgraced ; but, in the disgrace of one’s near relative the world forces one to participate.”

“ Is that all ?” she ejaculated. “ Then there is no need for any estrangement between you and me.”

“ It must be so, Mary. I can never again be known to you ! Listen. Mr. John Manesty, my near relative, the proud and wealthy merchant of Liverpool—the most

prominent man on 'Change—the seemingly pious Puritan—has confessed the truth of those accusations which the colonel repeated in your presence! O misery! The man by whom I have been brought up—from whom I have received unremitting kindness—whose lips never uttered to me any other than sage and godly counsels—this man, Mary, is a pirate, and—O God! how shall I utter it—a murderer!"

Hugh covered his face with his hands, and a dead silence ensued. Mary was stricken dumb. At length, Hugh was able again to speak.

" Nay, more, Mary," he ejaculated, in tones which demonstrated the terrible heart-throes that tormented him—" this guilty being, who is even now a trembling fugitive

from justice, is—the dreadful truth must out—**MY FATHER!**”

Mary sank on her chair. The words she had heard seemed to have scared away her senses. Hugh rang the bell violently, and on the entrance of a servant, followed by Mrs. Yarington, rushed from the room.

In crossing the park, on his return to Liverpool, young Manesty met Lord Silverstick going towards the house.

“Why, Hugh, my young friend,” said the earl, “you stride along as if you were walking for a wager! This will never do. You must give up these precipitate habits—they savour too strongly of the market and the exchange. Haste is vulgar. Pray recollect, that though you have the misfortune to be a merchant, gentle blood is in your veins;

so, at least, my friend, Sir Hildebrand, intimates."

Gentle blood, indeed! Hugh shuddered.

"And therefore," pursued the earl, "you are entitled to remember the invaluable maxims of my Lord Chesterfield, who prescribes composure in all things." Then, observing the distracted visage of the young man, he added, in a tone of natural sympathy which sounded very little in accordance with the selfish precepts of his great authority — "Is anything the matter, Hugh!"

"Much—much of dreadful import!" replied young Manesty. "I will not, at present trouble your lordship with a painful recital; but there is a minor point in my distress on which, if you will permit me, I

would solicit the favour of your advice. Will you grant it?"

"Willingly, and to the best of my ability," replied the good-natured nobleman, who, as already has been intimated, entertained a strong friendship for the young merchant. "Speak, Hugh."

"Your lordship has doubtless perceived that I am hated by Colonel Stanley; and that——"

"Stop, Hugh," interrupted the earl. "Hate is a violent term, and, to the best of my knowledge, has no place in the vocabulary of my Lord Chesterfield. I have, indeed, perceived that Colonel Stanley regards you inimically. Proceed."

"I have long endeavoured, my lord, to turn a deaf ear to his galling insinuations;

but happening (very incautiously, I admit,) to accompany Sir Hildebrand and Miss Stanley to the colonel's house this morning, he broke out into the most ferocious abuse of my relative, Mr. Manesty, in return for which I gave him the lie direct, and then blows were exchanged between us."

"Excessively preposterous and under-bred!" interposed the earl. "Well."

"I challenged him."

"You ought to have begun with that. A duel should be managed as politely as an exchange of compliments. Blows are current only among boors. If you get well out of this affair, *I'll* take you in hand, and furnish you with a code of regulations, by myself, founded on my Lord Chesterfield's principles, by observance of which you may

acquit yourself like a gentleman in any other matter coming within the same category. When do you and Colonel Stanley meet?"

"I have withdrawn my challenge."

"Ha!" exclaimed the earl, with a slight start. "How so?"

"Why, my lord, I felt from what I had subsequently the mortification to learn, that my cause was not a just one; and rather than put a man's life in jeopardy on a false ground of dispute, I resolved to submit to the imputation even of cowardice."

"My Lord Chesterfield would scarcely understand your magnanimity," observed the earl, coughing drily.

"Perhaps not," responded Hugh. "But in declining the meeting on the primary

cause of dispute, I still, in my letter, left it open to the colonel to adopt any other pretence for hostilities."

"Come, that's better," said the earl; "and conceived in a gentlemanlike spirit. I never imagined your ledgers could teach anything so refined."

"Pardon my abruptness, my lord," exclaimed the young man; "but——"

"No, I never pardon abruptness," said the earl; "anything rather than that."

"The long and the short of the matter is this," pursued Hugh, "I believe that from jealousy, connected with Miss Stanley, Colonel Stanley thirsts for my life. I have little doubt that my letter, declining to meet him on the original nature of the quarrel, will produce a hostile message from him. I am now going to ascertain if this expecta-

tion is well-founded. Should it be so, I have reason to think he will require a meeting to-night, which will be quite practicable, as there will be a full moon."

" Well."

" You know, my lord, that my pursuits in life have not thrown me much into the society of persons, any one of whom would be likely to act as a friend in such an emergency. What I wish to ask you is, that should Colonel Stanley do me the honour to call me out——"

" Expressed with perfect propriety," interrupted Lord Silverstick. " Suppose he does you the honour?—ha!"

" In that case, will your lordship be so kind as to introduce me to some gentleman who will accompany me?"

" My son, Lord Randy, is the very

man!" cried the earl. "No, stop!—now I recollect, it would be rather difficult to find him. And, on second thoughts, he is not exactly the person I could wish. He knows little of the regulations prescribed on such occasions. Make yourself easy, Hugh. If Colonel Stanley desires an appeal to arms, I, myself, will accompany you."

"*You*, my lord! How shall I express my thanks for your kindness—your condescension?"

"Say nothing about it, Hugh. Very possibly you'll hear no more of the affair. To ascertain which, instead of going to Sir Hildebrand's, as I intended, I will return to Liverpool. I cannot, however, much as I esteem you, my dear boy, enter the residence of Mr. Manesty, the merchant."

“ Nor is it necessary, my lord; I am not now in his house, but have taken up my quarters at the Liverpool Arms.”

“ That is well, then,” pursued the earl. “ My carriage is at the gate, and will soon deposit us at your hotel.”

Having arrived at Castle-street, in which stood the inn in question, Hugh inquired if any letter had been left for him during his absence. “ None, sir,” replied the waiter; “ but a gentleman is waiting in the coffee-room to see you. He told me to give you this card.” Hugh glanced at the name.

“ Shew the gentleman to my room,” he said. “ Here is a card, my lord,” he added, to the earl, “ from a Captain Brooksbank.”

“ Humph!” exclaimed the earl. “ A messenger from Colonel Stanley, doubtless. Quite *en règle*. We *shall* have the duel. Make up your mind to that. See him, and then refer him to me.”

CHAPTER XXIII.

SHEWING HOW MANESTY TOOK HIS PRECAUTIONS—
HIS SEARCH AFTER HUGH—AND WHAT ENSUED
ON HIS INTERVIEW WITH LAWYER VARNHAM,

FEELING convinced that he had secured his son's safety, as far as the intended duel with Stanley was concerned, Manesty, after Hugh had rushed from his presence, deliberately proceeded to re-open the sea-chests, and apply again to the task of examining and selecting their contents. Having lit a taper,

he held many of the manuscripts over the flame, and threw their burning reliques into the grate. Others he put aside, with a view of placing them, under seals and lock and key, in the custody of his attorney, Varnham. In this way, he had nearly emptied one of the chests, when he took out from among the undermost layer of papers, an unsheathed and rusty sword. Gazing intently on it, he exclaimed—

“ Ah, old acquaintance! I did well in consigning thee to perpetual rest after thy great deed! More than four and twenty years hast thou slumbered in utter inactivity. Thy blade formerly was bright and keen; *now* the greedy rust has gnawn it, and thou art sadly defeatured. But it was not fitting that thou shouldst be stained by mean blood,

after having drawn forth some of the best in the land. I have looked often at thee with exultation. Why dost thou now draw up the blinding water in my eyes, so that I scarce can see thee? And wherefore does my breast swell, and my heart throb, thus intolerably? Dost thou reproach me, old sword? What! did I use thee wrongfully? Well, well! Thy silent appeal almost unmans me. Yet, how could I bear the scorn, and hate, and fierce pride of him on whom at last I wreaked a bloody revenge?"

Manesty placed the sword aside, and leaned back in his chair, as if in deep rumination. He was, however, only a few minutes thus abstracted. Starting up, he said—

"I have no time to waste. I am in the

toils, and the hunters are upon me. Dexterously have I played my game—dexterously will I play it still. In spite of them, I shall escape. Escape! And am I then brought to such a pass as to think my greatest good is in successful flight? Oh, Manesty, thy pride, and cruelty, and selfishness, have ruined thee! Thou hast thought too little of this; and lo! the dreadful cup of bitterness is at thy lips. Thy fortune is gone. Thy name is the prey of the scorner. Though consorting with pious men, thou hast turned—hypocrite as thou art—a deaf ear to their counsels. But the words that are written in the wondrous Book sink deeply even into the hardest and most unbelieving hearts; and then, when least they are expected, rise up with fearful

threatening. In the days of my pride I cast them off; but *now* they burst out against me, even as avengers. ‘God,’ says the Psalmist, ‘hath prepared for the wicked man the instruments of death. He ordaineth his arrows against those that persecute. Whoso travaileth with iniquity, and hath conceived mischief, and brought forth falsehood, and made a pit and digged it for others, shall fall into the ditch which he made. His mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down upon himself.’ This is the truth of all ages; fearfully do I feel it! Fearfully *have* I felt it; but success, and pride, and the strength of manhood, and the impious sacrifice of all to self, have tempted me to defy it. Now I must reap the harvest I have sown.”

Having thus soliloquized, Manesty again addressed himself to the examination of the papers. While so employed, his hand lighted on a miniature of a woman, which he hastily thrust among the reserved documents.

“No, no!” ejaculated he, “I cannot look on *that!* I could contemplate the sword; but one glance at that pictured face would turn my eye-balls into stone. Hugh shall have it with the rest; 'twill be precious to *him*. Oh, Bertha!—dear, unhappy, lost Bertha! I have devoted to thy memory many a melancholy vigil; but never again may I visit the sacred room at Wolsterholme!”

Manesty covered his eyes with his hand awhile; when, removing it, and looking at

his palm, “What!” vociferated he, “*tears!* I never thought to be guilty of this weakness. Rouse—rouse thyself, John! Be not cast down. Summon to thee the daring of thy other self—Hoskins the pirate. It is all over with thee as a Liverpool merchant. This is no time to be maudlin. Pack up thy papers—order thy horse—but first see if thy pistols are in trim, and load them. John Manesty shall not be taken alive; no, not by twenty Oglethorpes.”

The merchant now thrust his reserved documents, including the old sword and the miniature, into a portmanteau, which he carefully locked and sealed; and then, summoning Hezekiah, ordered his horse, and prepared for a final adieu to Liverpool. Looking around him, as if for a farewell

glance at a room where he had passed many hours, his eyes fell on the papers he had given to his son as confirmations of the astounding intelligence respecting the young man's paternity.

“D—n—n!” roared Manesty. “He has left behind him the writings which alone could substantiate the truth of my assertion! Reflecting carefully on my words, he may think they were uttered in extremity as a manœuvre to hinder his duel with Stanley; and, under that impression, may rush into the field and be slain! Oh, my boy—my boy!—gladly would I die for thee even on the scaffold!”

This idea of Hugh's danger so absorbed the mind of Manesty that, for a moment or two, he was unconscious of everything else.

He was recalled, however, to a state of vigilance by hearing a low whistling and coughing below in the corn-store, in Mud-lane. “A signal!” said Manesty; when, approaching the window cautiously, and looking out, his eyes met those of Ozias Rheinenberger, whose face, lifted up towards him, was deadly pale and terror-stricken. Speech was out of the question, considering the interposing panes of glass, and the distance between the parties. The Moravian, therefore, trusting to dumb show, pointed with his thumb over his shoulder, as if to indicate that something was approaching in that direction, while, with a movement of the other hand, he waved Manesty off towards the front of the premises in Pool-lane.

“I understand him,” thought the mer-

chant, drawing away from the window, after nodding to Ozias to indicate that his hint was taken; “ and will profit by his suggestion. I thought to escape by the store; but I find I must take the other way. Well, it cannot be helped. Oglethorpe knows nothing about *two* doors. He will be over-reached by his own cunning. I have been in greater danger than this on the coast of Guinea. Now then.”

And, having placed a pistol in each of his capacious pockets, he seized the bundle he had made up, and drew aside the heavy bolts in the front door. At this moment a sound of voices in busy parley was heard at the entrance of the out-house, quickly followed by the thrust of a crow-bar, and a jarring noise made by forcing the door from

its fastenings. Manesty kept his position for a moment, anxiously listening, on the top of the front stairs, to ascertain if any similar danger was to be apprehended in *that* direction. But all *there* was quiet. Meanwhile, he was aware of the rush up the steps, or rather ladder, by which the room was gained from the out-house in the rear.

“Judging by the variety of voices,” said Manesty to himself, with an inaudible chuckle, “the fellows are strong in number. But even if they reach the door, they’ll find it rather a tougher job to force than they did the entrance below; and, as the ladder is narrow, only one can work at a time. Hallo! what’s that!” continued he, as a sudden snapping of wood was heard, suc-

ceeded instantly by a heavy fall, and sundry groans and execrations. “Capital, by ——! The ladder has broken; and some of the heavy rogues must have a few more bruises and fractures than they bargained for, even in coming to take me. Now is the time,” he added, descending the front stairs, and saying as he went, “Neither Oglethorpe, nor the devil himself, shall hinder my going to Wavertree after Hugh. My boy—my boy!”

Manesty’s steed was at the door, as had been ordered. Directing the portmanteau to be quickly strapped behind the saddle, he mounted, and galloped off in the direction of Wavertree, where he arrived soon after the time indicated by his son. Not a soul was on the ground; nor did the merchant

meet any one either going to or coming from the spot. Had anything happened of the kind he feared, some symptom of it must have met his observation. Braving every danger to himself, Manesty next went to other places where he thought Hugh might be found; but though, to his infinite disappointment, he could not trace him, he felt comforted in the conviction that no hostilities had taken place. He was resolved, however, at all hazards, to remain about Liverpool till midnight, in the hope of seeing his son once more, and imparting to him certain information as to his future prospects in life. But first, he must call on his attorney, Ezekiel Varnham.

Boldly and openly, as in the days of his pride, did John Manesty ride through the

streets of Liverpool. He neither hung down his head, nor drew his hat over his brows, nor sought by-streets, nor urged his horse beyond a gentle trot. It is not probable that he would have been thus careless on foot; but he felt convinced that, in case of any untoward rencontre, he might depend on the fleetness of his steed, whose blood and bone could not easily be matched. Thus audaciously did he ride to Varnham's house, standing by itself in a kind of court-yard. Having learnt that the lawyer was at home, Manesty took the precaution of placing his mare near the stable at the back of the building, whence egress could be obtained into a by-lane, and was then ushered into the lawyer's presence.

Ezekiel Varnham was a pleasant-spoken,

good-looking man, but an infinite rogue; a fellow of coaxing manners, but so thoroughly unprincipled, as to take advantage of any knowledge confidentially communicated to him by a client, if by those means he could forward the suit of a richer employer. Varnham was a sharp practitioner; that is to say, in his very first steps against an unfortunate debtor, he would at once swell the costs to the utmost extent. This, probably, was never intended by the spirit of the law; but Ezekiel Varnham looked only to the letter, equally reckless of the sufferings of his victim, and the interest of his client.

On entering the room, Manesty was immediately struck with a change in the demeanour of his attorney, who, scarcely rising from his seat, returned the merchant's

greeting with marked coolness. Manesty was not slow in assigning this to its proper cause, and was resolved at once to bring it to an issue.

“ Come, come, Ezekiel Varnham!” said he, “ this is folly. I know what you have heard of me; but I know also that, if it answered your purpose, you would not object to the devil himself for a client.”

“ You do me honour,” replied Varnham, with a slight sneer.

“ To be sure I do,” rejoined the other. “ Am I not right well instructed in the art of honouring lawyers?”

“ I have no time to-day to bandy compliments,” observed the attorney. “ If you wish to speak to me, Mr. Manesty, you must be brief. I have many pressing cu-

gagements," he added, taking out his watch.

"My time is also precious," said Manesty. "Therefore let us at once to business. In the first place ——"

"Stop a moment," interposed Varnham, "just while I give my clerk a few instructions touching the mortgage which ——"

"No, no, Varnham," returned Manesty, glancing sternly and significantly at the lawyer; "out of this room you do not pass till you and I have had full conference together. It is fit that we speak plainly one to another. *My* character is in rather a dangerous state at present; and *yours*, friend Ezekiel, is not so sound, but that it stands a little in need of repair. You, doubtless, think it would advance your

reputation as a disinterested and public-spirited citizen, if you were to deliver up to the law John Manesty—Manesty, the ruined man—who comes voluntarily and in confidence to your house. You shall not do this, Varnham, much as I admire your virtue."

"What mean you, Mr. Manesty?" asked Varnham, in all the confusion of a conscious rogue.

"Oh, you know well enough. Let us have no affectation. In a word, Varnham, you believe, because I am in extremity, that I must be without money. You are mistaken," continued he, producing a heavy bag, and convincing the lawyer that it was loaded with guineas. "Nay, more," he added, "it is perhaps your opinion that the

present posture of my affairs intimidates me. This is equally erroneous. See, Varnham, how well I am prepared, both to confer a reward, or to repel hostility."

So saying, the merchant drew a pistol from his pocket, and coolly laid it on the table. The lawyer's checks turned white, and his eyes were fixed on Manesty.

"I see you understand me, Ezekiel," pursued Manesty; "and you know I am not a trifler. Here, take this gold; you will find it to be no paltry fee."

With abundant acknowledgments, Varnham clutched the money, professing his readiness to act on behalf of Manesty with the utmost zeal and activity. But this change in his demeanour was only momentary. His eyes became restless, glancing

hither and thither, as if with apprehension; his manner was embarrassed, and his whole frame seemed uneasy and agitated.

“ I want nothing of you myself,” resumed the merchant. “ My object in visiting you is to place in your custody this portmanteau, chiefly containing papers. They are for the inspection of one eye only. But even that eye is not to see them yet. At the proper time, an order, signed by myself, will be presented, when you will deliver them. The bearer of this order will be prepared to pay, in addition to what you have now received, five hundred pounds, for the faithful discharge of your trust.”

Varnham’s eyes twinkled at the prospect, though his restlessness evidently increased; and he repeatedly looked at his watch.

“But,” pursued the merchant, “the slightest evidence of any tampering with the lock or seals will not only deprive you of the money, but also of a very valuable client, in the person of my successor, Mr. Hugh Manesty, whose property will not be prejudiced by any underhand dealing with that which I now commit to your charge, however he may be pained at knowing that the family information contained in those papers has been perused by any other than himself. I have entrusted you with the packet, because I have reason to suspect that all documents in my house will be overhauled by the authorities, and I should not like these to fall into their hands. I think I can now depend upon you, Varnham.”

“ Implicitly,” returned the lawyer.

“ Nothing more, then, need be said,” observed Manesty. “ That is your iron chest there in the corner, isn’t it?”

“ Yes.”

“ Well, Ezekiel, let me see you deposit my portmanteau safely in it, and then farewell.”

This was accordingly done to the merchant’s satisfaction; when, offering his hand to Varnham, who eagerly grasped it, as if infinitely relieved at the termination of the interview, Manesty rose to depart.

But his exit was destined to be not so quiet as his entrance. The door of the room was suddenly opened, and a man, whose head was bound round with a handkerchief, and whose visage bore evident

marks of a recent contusion, entered. Though thus disfigured, Manesty instantly recognised Measly Mott, whose voice he had heard among others during the morning assault in the corn-store. Varnham looked like one stricken with epilepsy. Catching a momentary glimpse of one or two other men in the passage, Manesty sprang like lightning to the door, closed, and locked it, and seizing Mott by the throat with his left hand, while with his right he held a pistol to the fellow's temple, said, in a low tone—

“ If you make the least signal, Measly Mott, you are a dead man. This is the fruit of your contrivance, Ezekiel Varnham. You knew I was coming here to-day,” added the merchant, with a reproachful and furious look at his attorney.

The constable trembled from head to foot. “For God’s sake, Mr. Manesty,” said he, “don’t go for to harm me! Consider my wife and her three beauteous babbies at home!”—an appeal which Measly Mott was in the habit of making on all occasions.

“Open that closet, Varnham,” said the merchant. “Quick, man—quick!”

Varnham could not choose but obey; and Manesty pushed Mott towards the recess, the man faintly ejaculating, “Here’s a go! assault and battery, and false imprisonment, and a compounding of felony, Mr. Varnham!”

Measly’s further eloquence was stifled, by his being jammed and bolted into the narrow enclosure. All this was accom-

plished in little more than a minute, when Manesty, springing through the window, gained the stable-yard at the rear, found his mare, vaulted into the saddle, and galloped off as fleetly as if he had been mounted on the back of a race-horse.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE MEETING AT WAVERTREE—WHAT HAPPENED
THEN AND THERE.

HAVING exchanged a few words with Lord Silverstick, Hugh repaired to his own room, where he found Captain Brooksbank.

“ Pray be seated, sir,” said Hugh. “ You come, I believe, from Colonel Stanley.”

“ I do, sir,” replied Brooksbank.

“ I can guess the purport of your visit,” rejoined Hugh; “ and you will oblige me by coming to the point at once.”

“In one word, then,” said Brocksbank, “the colonel demands from you either an unqualified apology, or a meeting at Wavertree, within an hour from the present time; and I am further to intimate, that if you elect the latter alternative, no apology will be received on the ground.”

Hugh's blood boiled in his veins, but he suppressed any manifestation of resentment, saying, calmly—

“Apology, Captain Brocksbank, is quite out of the question. I will meet the colonel.”

“But,” pursued Brocksbank, “I trust I need not point out to you the consequences of any other——”

“I know what you are about to say,” interrupted Hugh. “Spare yourself the

trouble of speaking, and me the mortification of hearing. Colonel Stanley may rest fully assured I shall not fail him."

"Favour me with your friend's name," said Brooksbank.

"The Earl of Silverstick," replied Hugh, to the evident surprise of Stanley's second. "You will not have to seek him, because, anticipating a message from the colonel, his lordship has been so polite as to accompany me here. Permit me to bring him to you now."

Hugh left the room, returning immediately with the earl, whom he introduced to Captain Brooksbank. After his lordship had made his most graceful salutations, Hugh left him and the captain together. Their conference, however, was

but short, for in less than ten minutes Lord Silverstick rejoined his young friend, telling him he had stipulated that pistols, not swords, should be the weapons used.

“Have you any affairs of pressing moment to arrange?” asked the earl.

“None,” replied Hugh.

“That is well,” returned Lord Silverstick. “A wise man should always be fully prepared for any and every emergency, as I see you are; and nothing ensures this but method. My Lord Chesterfield insisted strongly on the virtue of method. ‘Nothing,’ says he, ‘contributes more to dispatch than method. Lay down a method for everything, and stick to it inviolably.’ Now I never could impress this on my son, Randy. But you, my dear young friend, are instinc-

tively a gentleman—a gentleman *nascitur, non fit*; whereas twenty Lord Chesterfields could not have qualified for that appellation such a character as Colonel Stanley. I protest I have an excessive dislike to a man who cannot be brought to apprehend ‘the graces, the air, address, politeness, and, in short, the whole *tournure* and *agrémens* of a man of fashion. So many little things conspire to form that *tournure*, that though separately they seem too insignificant to mention, yet, aggregately——’”

“Pardon me, my lord,” said Hugh, interrupting the earl, who was gradually getting involved in the metaphysics of Chesterfield and *la mode*; “but time is fast slipping away, and though I have no affairs to arrange, yet, should I fall, perhaps your

lordship will not object to be the bearer of a message from me to Miss Stanley, especially as I have given her reason to suppose that all hostilities were at an end between me and her cousin."

"I trust my agency will not be required," said Lord Silverstick; "but, in any case, I will fulfil your wishes."

"Tell her, then," pursued young Manesty, "that I was forced into the field. Convince her that I had no choice."

"Nothing more?"

"Nothing, my lord, except that my last thoughts rested on her."

"I trust that happiness is yet in store for you both," said the good-natured nobleman. "In the affair now on your hands, firmness is everything, and I see you are

firm. Stanley is irascible, and that is a disadvantage. His second, too, seems rash. But, depend on it, nothing shall be done *contre les règles*. It is time to think of moving. Come. Where are your pistols?"

Hugh handed him the case, and Lord Silverstick inspected its contents. "London-made, I perceive," said he; "and, I protest, in very pretty condition. Come," he added, "we shall be able to drive deliberately to Wavertree. A gentleman should never be in a hurry. My Lord Chesterfield is precise on that point; and it is better to be too early than too late, especially on such an occasion as this."

The carriage was ordered. Lord Silverstick and young Manesty entered it, and proceeded towards Wavertree. Hugh, this

time, was first on the ground; but he had not long to wait, as Colonel Stanley and his friend soon appeared. The earl, with a ceremonious bow to Brooksbank, drew him aside, and they conversed for a couple of minutes.

“I think,” said Lord Silverstick, “as the moon is high, and gives a pretty equal light, and as the ground appears to be quite level, one position is as good as another.”

“Precisely so, my lord,” returned Brooksbank. “We have nothing to do but measure the distance and place our men.”

“Nothing more,” assented the earl. “Promptitude is a great excellence.”

A pistol was handed to each of the principals, who, at the distance of twelve paces,

stood, erect and calm, over against each other, waiting for the word, which Captain Brooksbank was on the point of giving in military style, when the quick tramping of hoofs was heard, and a man on horseback darted into the midst of the group, and, dismounting, stood between Stanley and the young merchant.

“Desist!” vociferated he, in a commanding tone. “Neither of you shall fire at the other, or the ball shall pass first through my body. Oh, Hugh,” he added, “I have sought you all day—I have traced you to the Liverpool Arms, and there heard something which convinced me you had come here on this mad purpose. But I have arrived in time. You shall not fight this Stanley. Give me your pistol.”

“Mr. Manesty,” said the young man, in a low voice, “leave the ground, I beseech you. I can take care of my own honour, which such an act as this, on your part, will injure for ever. Leave the ground; this affair with Colonel Stanley *shall* go on.”

“It shall not, I say,” roared Manesty. “Consider, dear Hugh, I have now no object to bind me to the world but you. And shall I see your life put in jeopardy on a mere punctilio? You will never behold me again after this night. I have much to say to you. Give over this encounter, or I shall do some deed of desperation.”

“And pray who may you be, sir?” asked Captain Brooksbank, stepping forward.

Manesty bent a stern brow on his inter-

rogator. “I answer no impertinent questions,” said he. “Suffice it, that I am a man who will not be bullied. You will find it dangerous to meddle with me.” Then, turning to the earl, who by this time had come close to the other second, he added—“Lord Silverstick, I know you; and I ask if you consider it worthy of your years and station in life to abet these foolish and deadly brawls? If your friend there, Colonel Stanley, should be maimed for life, he’ll be apt to think, that with a little less folly on your part, you might have taken care of his limbs and of his honour at the same time.”

“You are pleased to be satirical, sir,” returned Lord Silverstick, with a bow. “But give me leave to say, that you are in error in supposing Colonel Stanley to be

my friend. I come here as the friend of Mr. Hugh Manesty."

"Indeed!" ejaculated Manesty. "As his *friend*, then, do you desire this affair to go on?"

"Most assuredly," replied the earl, "unless my principal should receive an apology, which is not in the least probable. You must permit me, sir, to add, that I consider your interference most irregular, and contrary to the rules prescribed in the code of honour. Pray do me the favour to stand aside."

"Idiot!" muttered Manesty. Then advancing to the colonel, he said, "George Stanley, will nothing satisfy you but taking this young man's life, or meeting your own death at his hands?"

“Nothing,” replied the duellist. “You will not succeed in interrupting us. Provoke me not, John Manesty, or you may rue it. What! are we to have whining morality from the lips of a pirate and a murderer? Where was your morality when the sailor was drowned by your deed? Here, Brooksbank, help me to bind this fellow neck and heels to ——”

Manesty did not pause for the conclusion of Stanley’s threat. “Scoundrel, black-leg, madman!” shouted he. “Thou wilt make me guilty of more blood. Thy death be on thine own head!” Drawing forth a pistol, Manesty fired, and Stanley fell mortally wounded.

The suddenness of this desperate act struck a momentary panic into the whole

party, during which Manesty armed himself with a second pistol, saying, as he cocked it, “Let no man, as he loves his life, venture to lay hands on me.”

He then, in a voice not to be heard by the others, told Hugh where he might find him, and supplicated the young man to come to him at night. “I must now,” added he, “fly from this place.”

The words had no sooner escaped him than a tumult of voices swelled on the wind, among which the most audible was that of Oliver Oglethorpe.

“Come on, my men!” bawled he, “We’ve caught him at last. There he is. I see him. Mr. Hibblethwaite, secure the horse, while I tackle the man. Quick—quick!”

“ Say you so ?” ejaculated Manesty. Vaulting into the saddle, and putting spurs to his mare, he flew away like the wind.

CHAPTER XXV.

DEATH OF COLONEL STANLEY — A MAN'S ENEMY
MAY LAMENT HIS FALL MORE THAN A FRIEND—
CHESTERFIELDIAN MORALS — THE MORAVIAN —
HUGH IN CUSTODY.

A SAD and turbulent scene did the moon that night look down on: Manesty, the murderer, flying for his life from the pursuit of Oglethorpe, Hibblethwaite, and others; and Stanley stretched on the earth with features deformed by agony, while every gasp forced a red stream from his

wound. Young Manesty and the earl seemed paralysed at the death-struggle before their eyes ; but Brooksbank viewed the scene with perfect *sang-froid* : he had come to the ground to see the shedding of blood, and to him it was indifferent who was the sufferer. Strange to say, the knowledge that his friend had fallen, not in combat, but by the hand of an assassin, failed to arouse his sympathies ; to be a man of feeling was beneath the stern dignity of a soldier.

Differently, indeed, was Hugh affected by this event. His implacable enemy was destroyed ; but in what manner ! Could he have reinstated himself in the position he held when he arose in the morning—could he again have enjoyed the honourable estimation of his brother merchants—a flourish-

ing property, and a sweet hope of an alliance with Mary Stanley, he would have forfeited all to restore his persecutor to life. The groans, the convulsed visage, and the gushing blood of that wretched man, tortured him beyond endurance. He had borne his own afflictions proudly; but this last and horrible addition to his misery made the burden too heavy, and his heart sank under it.

“Captain Brooksbank!” ejaculated he, “your friend will die, unless instant aid is procured. Oh, God, that it should come to this! Drive, I beseech you, to Liverpool, for a surgeon. I will not for one instant leave Colonel Stanley.”

“To take any trouble about it would be useless,” returned Brooksbank. “Stanley

can't live ten minutes ; before the expiration of which time, we shall all be in custody if we stay here. A man's first duty is to take care of himself. I'm off. You and his lordship may do as you like."

Having said this, he hastened to the post-chaise, which had brought him and Stanley to Wavertree, and drove away at a rapid pace.

This selfish cold-heartedness opened a new source of bewilderment to Hugh, whose knowledge of the world was too confined to permit even a suspicion of the monstrous cruelty of self-interest. Stanley could do nothing more for Brooksbank—why should Brooksbank care for Stanley ? Pity was not given us to be cast away for nothing. Why should we sow where we cannot hope

to reap? Commiseration is a ledger affair. How much profit may be cleared by investing it? "That is the question."

"Kindness is subtle, covetous,
If not a usuring kindness; as rich men deal gifts,
Expecting in return twenty for one."

Young Manesty, however, was not hardened into this sordid depravation. Seeing that the dying man was left without a friend, he resolved, as far as in him lay, to supply that deficiency. Bending by the side of Stanley, he raised his head, supported it on his knee, and wiped away the death-perspiration that hung on his forehead and cheek.

"Here will I stay till all is over," said Hugh, to the earl. "Meanwhile, let me beseech you, for Heaven's sake, to fetch a surgeon from Liverpool."

Lord Silverstick seemed for awhile undetermined how to act. "I do not altogether approve," at length observed he, "the callous desertion of his principal by Captain Brooksbank. Still, prudence is a great virtue. Without it, our lives would be excessively miserable. Lord Chesterfield has many excellent remarks on this head; and it behoves every man of quality to bear them in mind. His morals are profitable. I recollect his saying, 'Nothing could be more perfectly foolish in any one than to suffer his feelings to lead him away from expediency.' This I call practicable wisdom, Hugh; it is pretty generally acted on, I assure you; and I think you will admit that, to say the least, it would be extremely inconvenient for one in my station to be

taken before a magistrate, as having been present at a murder. I came here with you to assist at a gentlemanly arbitrement. That it should have terminated in assassination is not my fault nor yours. I shall depart from Liverpool with all speed. Will you come with me?"

"And leave this unhappy victim to die alone? Never!" exclaimed young Manesty.

"Then, my dear friend, until I have the happiness to see you again, accept *mes adieux.*"

The earl disappeared as quickly as Captain Brooksbank had done, and Hugh was left alone with the dying man. The rattle of Lord Silverstick's coach-wheels soon died away in the distance. Silence returned,

investing the scene with additional solemnity. Hugh bound his handkerchief over Stanley's wound with an endeavour to stanch the oozing blood. What would he not have given for some restorative which might mitigate the sufferer's fierce agonies—for even a cup of water to moisten his parched tongue!

Hugh looked around him—all was vacant. He listened intently, hoping to catch some distant sound of footsteps. In vain. Nothing could be heard but Stanley's heavy groans. Thus, supporting the head of his ghastly companion, did he remain a weary space of time. At length, he shouted aloud for help twice or thrice. The last shout was answered; and Ozias Rheinenberger appeared.

Having sorrowfully gazed at Stanley, the Moravian spoke; and his measured enunciation sounded dismally in the night air.

“This is a dreadful sight, Hugh Manesty! I know that thy hands are innocent of blood in fact, but not in intention. Thou camest here on a senseless, and a wicked, and a savage errand. The fatal business is beginning to be known in Liverpool. The moment I heard of it, I hastened to the spot to find, and, if possible, comfort thee; for of a surety none can so grievously need comfort as he who hath offended against the ordinances of the Most High. Lo, here will I abide with thee. Others will soon be in the place—ministers of justice.”

“Thank Heaven!” exclaimed Hugh;

“then something may yet be done to save this unfortunate man.”

“Let us hope so,” answered Ozias. “Thy uncle—how have I been deceived in him!—is indeed a fearful man of blood. Like unto Abimelech, the son of Jerubbaal, he hath made slaughter the road to power; and even as Abimelech perished, so will he. And yet, would I could save him, and cause him to repent, for I owe much to the name of Manesty; but it may not be!”

Poor Hugh groaned in bitterness of heart.

“I wonder not to see thee so troubled in spirit,” resumed the Moravian. “In the eye of worldly law, thy crime is not great. Thou shalt not lack my counsel and company. Wherever they take thee, I will be by thy side.”

“ My heart thanks you, Mr. Rheinenberger!” ejaculated young Manesty.

“ But thy uncle,” continued Ozias. “ What is to become of him? Alas! I fear he is lost, body and soul. Avenging men are hotly on his track; among whom is Richard Hibblethwaite, who (so I hear) is mad with rage at something he has recently discovered. I tremble to think John Manesty’s speedy death may not be averted. My heart yearns to save him *after* death. He hath tempted Satan to tempt him. O God!” added the Moravian, with uplifted eyes, “ be merciful, even unto him, a desperate sinner!”

Further discourse was prevented, by the arrival of four persons, three of whom were constables, bearing a litter; the other was a medical man.

It appeared, that though the pursuit of Manesty was the chief object of Oglethorpe and his followers, one of the latter was nevertheless dispatched to the public office of Liverpool with news of Manesty's fresh atrocity, (which Oglethorpe had witnessed on approaching the group,) and with a requisition for assistance on the spot. This astounding news was buzzed about, and reached the ears of the Moravian.

Hugh was immediately taken into custody; and the surgeon having, as well as he was able, examined Colonel Stanley's wound, ordered him to be placed in the litter, and conveyed to his own house. Young Manesty, the officer who had charge of him, and Ozias Rheinenberger, then proceeded to the magistrate's office, where, after examination,

Hugh was held to bail to appear, should any charge be made against him. His sureties were the Moravian, and another of the "Unitas Fratrum;" the former of whom took the afflicted young man to his (Rheinberger's) own house.

News was brought to them, in the course of the night, that Stanley had expired on the litter, as they were carrying him home.

CHAPTER XXVI.

LAWYER VARNHAM'S PERfidY AND ITS RESULTS—

MRS. YARINGTON AND MARY STANLEY.

JOHN MANESTY had not long left Varnham's house before that respectable attorney, having sent away the constables in the passage, took counsel with himself how far he might be able to obtain possession of the secrets contained in the portmanteau, and yet secure the five hundred pounds for delivering it to the person authorized by

Manesty to receive it. In this interesting and all-absorbing contemplation, he was oblivious of Mr. Mott in his narrow prison. Having ordered his clerk to deny him to any applicant, the lawyer took the portmanteau from his iron chest, inspected the lock and seals, and soon determined on further proceedings.

If the rules of honour and common honesty cannot withhold a man from doing wrong, other impediments offer but feeble resistance. "A mould," thought Ezekiel, "might be taken from the seals, and counterfeits be thus obtained."

The lock was evidently a good one, and could not easily be picked nor opened by such keys as Varnham possessed; but then, with a little patience and dexterity, the

rivets might be withdrawn and refastened. In patience and dexterity the lawyer was not deficient; so he applied himself to his task, and, having formed what are called matrices of the different seals capable of renewing the impressions, he melted and disengaged the wax. His next process was to withdraw the rivets by which the hasp of the lock was fastened. This was so adroitly accomplished as not to threaten any difficulty in the work of restoration. The contents of the portmanteau were thus placed in Varnham's power.

Mysterious indeed, but wise and blessed, are the works of the Creator! His mighty protection is manifest even in the acts of daring men. Was not Jeroboam tempted to stretch out his hand against the man of

God at the altar in Bethel? And did he not, by so doing, draw down a withering curse upon his arm, and bring evil on all his descendants? Without a consideration such as this, it might seem marvellous that so cautious and crafty a man as John Manesty should leave writings from which (ambiguous and fragmentary as they were) it might be possible to form damning conclusions. But so it was.

The first paper which Varnham drew forth was a diary, embracing not only certain memorandums leading to an inference of the gradual and long-sighted treachery by which he had undermined the elder Hibblethwaite, but some obscure hints only intelligible on the supposition, that, by subtle poison, brought from the West Indies,

he had destroyed that unsuspecting man in the memorable room in the corn-store. To kill him was unquestionably more merciful than, by a series of villainous acts, to drag him to poverty. In the present day the latter is the current plan among unprincipled men. That Manesty chose the former method, was not out of charity for his victim, but because he thought the shortest road the best. No wonder that, with trembling apprehension, he concealed his papers both at Pool-lane and at Wolsterholme. His besotted incontinence of pen (whatever might have been his views) was a necessary agent in the fulfilment of eventual justice.

Varnham did not stop to read more. He knew that Dick Hibblethwaite, fool and

spendthrift as he was, retained a wreck of his property; that he could yet pay handsomely for such information as was developed in the written document, which afforded evidence sufficient of the foul practices of Manesty towards his father and himself. To young Hibblethwaite, therefore, Varnham immediately repaired; and, after representing that he had facts of vital importance to communicate, and binding him to secrecy, obtained from him a valuable *douceur*. Dick's astonishment at the interpretation which he could not fail giving to the writer's memorandums, was overcome by a spirit of vengeance against him whom he now believed to be the destroyer of his father; and he swore never to rest till he had hunted him even to death. Hearing

that Oglethorpe had a warrant to apprehend Manesty, the young man attached himself to the pursuing party—provided horses for every member of it, and was himself mounted on his blood-mare, Jessy.

On returning to his house, and again secluding himself in his room, with a view to a further examination of the portmanteau, Varnham was startled by a low knocking, seemingly against the wainscot. Guilt startles at trifles. Ezekiel looked round in dismay; but no one was in the apartment except himself. Again the knocking was heard, and for a moment the lawyer underwent a tremor at the idea that some invisible agent was rebuking his treachery. “Let me out!” cried a voice; and then, though not till then, did the lawyer recollect that

Mott was locked in the parlour closet. Hurrying the portmanteau out of sight, Varnham released the prisoner, who, staggering forward, sank exhausted into a chair.

“ Why, you look ill, my friend,” said Ezekiel, opening the window, and admitting air.

“ Enough to make a man look ill, and feel ill, too,” returned Mott. “ I’ve been jammed upright in that infernal cupboard two hours at least. Why didn’t you let me out before you went out yourself?”

“ I was called away by pressing business, and actually forgot you, Mott,” replied Varnham. “ Shall I order you some refreshment?”

“ No,” said Mr. Mott, sulkily. “ To speak upright and downright, Mr. Varn-

ham, I am able to prove that you've took and compounded felony. If you hadn't opened that closet door, I should have took John Manesty upon a charge of murder, as sure as eggs is eggs."

"Not you," responded the lawyer. "I mean no offence to you, Mott, but *two* better men than you would have been required to secure the merchant. Talk no more nonsense, man; but be thankful that by providing you with a retreat, I prevented the blowing out of your brains by John Manesty's pistol."

"When an officer's on service," observed Mott, with a dogged air, "aint it his duty to expose his precious life to all hazards? Though I'm a husband and a father, Mr. Varnham, and have three small babbies and

a wife to provide for, yet my body belongs to our sovereign lord the king, in the execution of the statutes as by law——”

“ I know all about that,” interrupted Varnham. “ Say no more. Here are a couple of guineas for you.”

“ I don’t think it’s altogether agreeable to my duty to take ‘em,” returned Mott, handling the money. “ I never, in all my life, took a bribe, ‘specially on service.”

“ But you are not on service now,” observed the lawyer. “ Besides, you know you can trust *me*. Put the coin in your pocket, Mott, and say no more about it.”

The constable did as he was bidden. Then, assuming a very grave and important face, he said—

“ There’s another thing, Mr. Varnham,

which you and I must just understand one another about, afore I leave this room."

"Why, what's the matter now?" demanded Ezekiel, in a trembling voice.

"I see you through the key-hole," pursued Mr. Mott, "a taking moulds of seals, and drawing out of rivets from a lock to a portmantel. It *may* be all right, you know, or it *mayn't*; but if any question about papers in a portmantel should ever come up, and I should be put upon my bodily oath as to what I see when I was locked into the cupboard, I *must* speak the truth, Mr. Varnham. It's clean agen the law to commit perjury."

The lawyer shook from head to foot. Oh, how he cursed his forgetfulness! His

golden project was in danger of a disgraceful miscarriage. What was to be done?

“ My good friend,” said Varnham, coaxingly, “ what you saw me do, was done from the best motives. You will, I am sure, believe me when I say so. But one is obliged sometimes to do good by stealth, as the saying is, and I wish to confer a benefit without any one suspecting me as the agent. You understand me. So strong, indeed, is this desire of mine, and so benevolent are my intentions, that I am disposed to make it worth your while to be silent on this head. In short, I’ll give you something handsome, Mott.”

“ How much?”

“ Why, twenty guineas. There! What think you of that?” said Varnham, as if he were offering an unheard-of treasure.

“ It’s no go,” responded Mott. “ Twenty guineas! Do you think I can forget such a caper as that for twenty guineas? No, no; I must have fifty at least.”

“ You are hard with me,” said the lawyer. “ But come, as I hate quarrelling, here’s the money. You are a fortunate man, Master Measly.”

Things had indeed that morning turned out well for Mott; and he chuckled in his sleeve at having, by a mere accident, and without much trouble, gained so much more than Oglethorpe was likely to obtain, even on severe and hazardous service. Varnham and his *friend* now separated with mutual smiles; but the former was not quite so silly a rogue as to feel altogether secure that his secret in Mott’s hands was

inviolable. Neither did Mott mean that it should be so, if a good opportunity were to offer. No popular fallacy is so great as the adage, “ Honour among thieves.”

“ Fifty-two guineas gone!” exclaimed Varnham. “ A trifle more than my fee from Hibblethwaite. And, worse than all, I am in the power of that scoundrel Mott. What could have possessed me to forget him? I was too hot upon my gains. Fool, fool! I wish Mott had been fairly suffocated in the closet, and tumbled out a heavy corpse when the door was opened. I shall be a slave to that fellow as long as I live. Well, it can’t be helped. Fate was against me.”

It was some time before the lawyer resumed his examination of the portmanteau.

Meanwhile, intelligence of Manesty's flight—of his last atrocious deed, and of Hugh's apprehension as a supposed accessory in the murder of George Stanley, reached Eaglemont. Sir Hildebrand was at first overpoweringly amazed and virtuously indignant. These emotions, however, gradually gave way to a feeling of self-congratulation that John Manesty's guilt might, in the end absolve him (the baronet) from certain heavy liabilities he was under to the merchant. Sir Hildebrand was no party in the murder of his nephew. Why, then, should he suffer his lamentation at that event to blind him to the "goods the gods provided?" So truly does the old proverb say, "It is an ill wind indeed that benefits no one!" And so surely does love of self blind some men to the sufferings of others.

But a far different effect was produced by the news on the hearts of Mary Stanley and Mrs. Yarington. The former of these ladies was distracted when informed of the violent fate of her cousin, and the supposed peril of Hugh. The latter was breathless, as if she heard the voice of Fate, after long silence, announcing a terrible consummation.

“A long and fearful tragedy has passed before my eyes,” said the widow to Mary Stanley; “but I feel that the catastrophe is fast approaching. John Manesty will never be taken alive, depend on that. He cannot, however, escape—he cannot escape! His last journey has come. He is flying, with whirlwind speed, to death. Dreadful-reprobate as he is, I cannot help pitying him. My heart is overladen. Bear with

me, Mary!" continued she, bursting into a passionate flood of tears.

The deepening mystery which hung over Mrs. Yarington drew Mary Stanley from her own sorrows, for not even these could hinder the strong emotion of curiosity. She burned with impatience to learn the strange facts concealed in the widow's bosom. But so bitter seemed the sufferings of the latter, that Mary viewed them with silent respect; and Mrs. Yarington, after endeavouring without success to regain her composure, retired to the solitude of her own room. Her meditations there are known only to herself and Heaven.

In the morning, she appeared more calm and collected, though something in her

demeanour seemed to indicate that her serenity was forced. She inquired of the servants if any fresh news had been heard of Manesty. On their answering in the negative, she expressed surprise, adding, “He cannot escape: the world is not wide enough to afford him a hiding-place. Wretched man! he will never sleep again, unless it be the final sleep.”

“And Hugh,” said Mary Stanley—“surely Hugh can be in no danger? He is too good—too honourable to be implicated in the deeds of his father.”

“His father!” echoed Mrs. Yarington. “Why do you call John Manesty his father?”

“Alas!” responded Mary, “perhaps I have betrayed his confidence. You, dear

Mrs. Yarington, will not, I am sure, take advantage of my want of caution."

"Did he tell you this himself?" asked the widow.

"Yes."

"Poor Hugh! What must be his agony!" ejaculated Mrs. Yarington. "For many years," continued she, "the great longing of my heart has been to visit Wolsterholme Castle. This could not be gratified, because the place had fallen, by purchase, into the hands of John Manesty, and because I heard he visited it frequently. I have already told you, that not for worlds would I stand in presence of that man. But when his career shall be over—when the grave has closed on him—I would fain again see Wolsterholme. It was the haunt

of my youth, Mary. Will you go thither with me?"

"Willingly," responded Miss Stanley.

"And Hugh shall go with us too," said Mrs. Yarington. "The place is deserted, vacant, and in ruins; but I am told its quaint and formal garden still exists; and one of the rooms, called the garden-room, has been kept in repair by John Manesty. That he should go to this room once a-year, and seclude himself in it, is the only good thing I know of the ruthless merchant. God knows he had reason enough to make an annual vigil there! To stand once more in that room, with young Manesty and you, Mary, by my side, will indeed be balm to my heart."

"You have often, by obscure hints, dearest

Mrs. Yarington," said Mary, "roused my curiosity. You speak of Manesty and Hugh, as if in your hands, and yours alone, some all-important secret touching them was deposited."

"Not of themselves only," responded the widow.

"Of whom else?" interrogated Mary.
"Speak!"

"Of myself," said Mrs. Yarington, in a faltering tone.

"Then why not confide in me?" pursued Miss Stanley. "You know how my life is bound up in that of Hugh. I cherish, moreover, a deep and affectionate interest in yourself. Judge, then, how torturing to me is this suspense."

"I may not speak," hurriedly exclaimed

Mrs. Yarington, "while John Manesty lives. After his death—for his speedy doom is inevitable—we will go to Wolsterholme. Something will be found in the garden-room to corroborate my story. Then and there, you shall know all."

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE FLIGHT AND PURSUIT—THE ENCOUNTER.

Away, away, away, with almost lightning speed, flew Manesty, while Oglethorpe, another constable, and Hibblethwaite, rushed on his track as if they were hunting some foul beast of prey. At starting from Wavertree, the merchant was about a hundred yards a-head of his pursuers, an advantage which his white mare, Prue, was not long in

increasing. Whether Manesty had any specific object to attain in the course he took, will presently appear; but certain it is he avoided the banks of the Mersey, and struck eastward across the county. Words of encouragement to his mare were mingled with sharp strokes of the spur, and Prue, being in good condition, kept up the advance she had gained.

Still the man-hunters were not far behind. Manesty could plainly distinguish between the shouts of Oglethorpe and Hibblethwaite, and even heard the rapid tramping of their horses. He nevertheless would not suffer any distrust, however slight, to cross his mind, but fully relied on the known fleetness, blood, and constancy of his mare.

“ Well done, Prue!” said he, patting her

neck. “Thou only canst save thy master. Keep up, old lass! we shall have a hard run. I know thou canst do it, Prue. Keep up!”

Thus encouraged, the good steed, as if she had understood her master’s words, strained her limbs, and, in a few minutes, the sound of the pursuers, though still heard, grew more and more faint; and Manesty, having already reached Knotty Ash, (a distance of four miles,) took the road towards Prescot, hoping in the next four miles to get further from those who were chasing him, and intending as he approached the town, to avoid it by diverging from the highway, with a view to baffle Oglethorpe and Hibblethwaite, who he thought would be likely to lose time in the streets by making fruitless inquiries after him.

Prue still kept gallantly a-head. In a little time the lights of Prescot were visible. Manesty glanced rapidly behind him; but, though the moon was bright, he could discern nothing of the pursuing party, neither did any noise indicate their approach.

“Bravo, Prue!” exclaimed he. “I knew thou wouldst try their mettle. But the race is not won yet, my lass. On, on!”

Putting in practice his plan of making a circuit outside the town, in order, according to hunting phraseology, to “balk the scent,” Manesty turned into a by-lane, and his mare having leaped a clumsy gate, the horse and rider were soon in open fields. Hedges and ditches were no impediment to their headlong speed. About two miles

were thus traversed, when the fugitive thought it best once more to take the road, which he soon regained. Here he had the mortification to find that his manœuvre had failed, and that, by doubling the distance in his circuit, he had given great advantage to Oglethorpe and Hibblethwaite, whom he now heard close in the rear. The race became more desperate than ever; but seeing that his mare was still in good wind, Manesty uttered a few coaxing words, gave her a taste of the spur, and the poor animal, once more making a tremendous effort, seemed rather to fly than to run.

It was now getting rather late; and as Manesty dashed through Rainhill, he perceived that the houses were all closed. Bold and Sankey were soon left behind; and on

crossing Sankey Bridge, the fugitive had the gratification to find that his pursuers were again at a considerable distance from him. A few minutes more brought him into the main street of Warrington.

“Poor Prue!” said Manesty, “thou hast done this eighteen miles gloriously. Ah! thou dartest a sidelong glance at that inn; but we mustn’t stop here, my lass. Away, away!”

Arriving at Martin’s Croft Green, Manesty perceived the first formidable obstacle he had yet encountered—namely, a turnpike. Both the gate and lodge were closed. His very life hung upon the few moments that must be lost by rousing the gate-keeper. Prue shewed a little sign of distress; but, hit or miss, she must take the

leap. Manesty knew how to humour her. Making a tremendous exertion, the noble creature sprang into the air, and both man and horse descended safely on the other side the gate.

“ Well done, Prue!” said Manesty. “ Oglethorpe and his follower will never be able to manage *that*. Dick might, perhaps; but the others *must* be left behind. Even if Dick comes up with me, it will be only man to man; and I don’t mind that, though it won’t do to provoke an encounter, as the other fellows will still be in the rear.”

Oglethorpe, his follower, and Hibblethwaite soon came in view of the gate. “ Confound it!” ejaculated Dick, “ Manesty has leaped that ’pike. We shall lose him unless we do the same.”

“I wouldn’t attempt it for a hundred pound,” gasped Oglethorpe, who was already pretty nearly exhausted. “Besides, I don’t know how. I should be smashed to atoms; I’m sure I should.”

“You’re a fool, Oliver,” returned Dick. “*I’m* not going to be foiled in this way. We’re near the gate now. My mare *must* take it at all hazards. You will follow as well as you can. Here goes!”

If Hibblethwaite’s mare was not so thorough-bred as Manesty’s, yet as Dick was a much lighter man than the merchant, the leap was pretty well accomplished.

Oglethorpe now thumped at the door of the lodge. It was no easy matter to wake the inmate, but at last he appeared; and, amidst a torrent of maledictions from the constable, opened the gate.

“We’ll do our best, Tom,” said Oglethorpe to his companion, as they spurred on again.

“We’re obligated to do that, you know, as officers, to say nothing of the blood-money. It’s lucky, however, we’ve got rid of Mr. Hibblethwaite. He kept us too tight at it. I’m blest if both I and my horse arn’t thoroughly blown. John Manesty rides like the devil. We won’t give in just yet, though there’s no manner of use in following him. Come on, Tom; but we’ll take it a little more easy this time.”

Manesty was now considerably in advance even of Hibblethwaite. On, on, at full speed passed he through Bixton and Cadishead Green. Arriving at Irlam, and perceiving that poor Prue seemed much exhausted, he was tempted to stop and bait at “The Nag’s Head,” from the bar of which

a cheering light threw its beams across the road. Alas, he must not pause! If his mare could hold on eight miles more he should be in Manchester, in the intricacy of whose by-streets he might refresh himself and horse without much danger of being traced by Hibblethwaite.

Prue was now covered with foam, out of wind, and labouring terribly. Manesty, knowing that Dick's horse could not fail to be equally distressed, allowed the poor creature to take her own pace, which, though not so fleet as before, got over the ground rapidly. On, on! Peel Green, Eccles, and Pendleton were soon left behind; and having crossed Salford Bridge, the fugitive soon found himself in the thick of Manchester.

It was now between twelve and one at

night; yet Manesty succeeded in gaining admission to an obscure inn, situated in a squalid part of the town; and having consigned Prue to the care of the ostler, with all manner of tender injunctions, our fugitive recruited himself with a glass of brandy-and-water. Wonderful were his coolness and self-possession! How knew he whether a “hue and cry” was not raised against him over the whole country? His mare had evidently been ridden within an inch of her life; and his appearance in such a part of the town at such an hour was calculated to excite suspicion. In spite of all this, Manesty talked with the ostler as if nothing had happened; went to the stable to see that Prue had been well tended, and then sat down, with seeming unconcern, to a cold supper.

“I shall be in no hurry,” said he to himself. “Prue must have some rest, poor thing! I could manage, I dare say, to get a fresh horse here in Manchester, but on no other than Prue can I place reliance. Dick Hibblethwaite must, by this time, be somewhere about the town. If *he* gets another horse, he’ll shoot a-head of me; and as he can’t know the direction I’m going to take, he’ll be confoundedly out in his reckoning. If he keeps to his own mare, why she’ll need the stable as much as mine. As to Oglethorpe and the other fellow, I value *them* not a rush on the road. There’s no hurry. I doubt if Prue will be fit for work again this morning; at all events, she must have as much rest as possible. If I can gain the point I seek, I

can conceal myself there awhile and baffle pursuit; after which, I must stretch across to Hull, disguised, and on foot—a weary way—and bribe some skipper to take me afloat, and set sail. Dick Hibblethwaite! What in the devil's name can have induced that fellow to hunt me in this fashion? Is he so reduced as to have become a constable? Or can he have discovered — Pshaw! I will not think of it. Landlord," continued he, making an effort to throw off dismal ruminations, "landlord, another glass of brandy-and-water—hot and strong."

Thus resting and recruiting his strength, he remained two hours. Often, and sorrowfully, his thoughts reverted to Hugh. "My son, my dear son!" he inwardly exclaimed, "bitterly wilt thou suffer for the

crimes of thy father! How shall I convey to thee the documents it is necessary thou shouldst receive? I shall never see thee again, Hugh—never! Misery, misery!"

Rousing again from his grief, he prepared for a renewal of flight; ordered and deliberately settled his bill; and then accompanied the ostler to the stable. Prue was again saddled. As he patted her neck and smoothed her mane, the noble animal knew her master's hand, and neighed, as much as to say she would try once more to carry him. Having mounted, Manesty took his course along Mosley Street, in the direction of the Oldham Road, by which he quitted Manchester.

To his great relief, the moon had now sunk: darkness would favour his progress,

and above an hour must elapse before day-break. He might yet gain the temporary refuge he sought. Newton Heath, Hollin Wood, and Oldham, were passed without any incident to excite the fugitive's apprehension; but he was a little startled at Green-Acres-Moor, on hearing, in the distance behind him, a sound as of a horse's galloping. This grew more and more distinct, and came nearer and nearer.

“ H—ll and the devil!” exclaimed he, “ I shall be overtaken, after all!”

Manesty now endeavoured to urge Prue to her former speed, and the poor animal did her best. Her heart was good, but her limbs were stiff; for, excepting her rest at Manchester, she had been hard at work since the preceding forenoon. A few words

from her master, however, so animated her, that she sprang forward gallantly. But the temporary excitement soon flagged: she relapsed into weariness, thus enabling the horseman in pursuit to come up.

“I have you now, John Manesty!” roared Hibblethwaite. “Yield! or by ——, I’ll shoot you as I would a mad dog! Surrender, murderer!”

One of the most critical moments of Manesty’s life had now arrived. He met it as he had met the others, with entire presence of mind. Some of the most valuable attributes of man are often possessed by villains; and so it was in the present instance. The purest and most lofty-minded hero could not be more resolute and firm than Manesty shewed himself under the weight of all his

atrocities, and with destruction staring him in the face.

“Get thee back, Richard Hibblethwaite!” said he, taking a pistol from the holster and cocking it. “Get thee back! I would not willingly do thee harm. Why dost thou thirst for my blood?”

“Blood!” repeated Hibblethwaite, grinding his teeth as he spoke, and keeping close to the merchant—“I marvel, John Manesty, that you can utter that word. I am here to revenge my father’s death!”

On hearing these words, Manesty shook in his saddle. Though not prepared for such knowledge on the part of his pursuer, he, nevertheless, soon recovered his self-possession.

“No more parley,” continued Hibblethwaite. “Yield, or meet your end!”

"I do not see the necessity for one or the other," retorted the merchant, coolly. "Man to man—blood for blood!"

So saying, he presented his pistol full at Hibblethwaite, and fired. The latter was even with him, and discharged *his* pistol at the same instant. Manesty tumbled from his horse, and fell, a senseless and bloody heap, on the ground. Hibblethwaite, too, was hit, having received the ball in his bridle arm.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE PARTY AT WOLSTERHOLME — THE OLD OAK CABINET — MRS. YARINGTON'S RECITAL — A SURPRISE.

HIBBLETHWAITE's left arm hung uselessly by his side. The horse he rode was strange to him, having been hired at Manchester, where he left Jessy thoroughly blown, and unable to go on. His present steed was a nettlesome beast, and being unfamiliar with its rider, did not seem to comprehend the

transfer of the bridle to the right hand. Jessy would have known better.

But though the horse shayed and reared, and though Dick was writhing with pain, he contrived, nevertheless, being a thorough equestrian, to convince his steed that its caprices were altogether erroneous and absurd; and, having forced the animal to adopt a more decent and befitting line of conduct, drew close to Manesty, and contemplated him (as well as starlight would permit) as he lay bleeding on the ground. Prue stood without motion by her master's side, looking piteously down on him, and rubbing her face against his.

“He’s dead!” ruminated Hibblethwaite. “There he lies, with a huge mountain of iniquities over him. God help us all! I

slew him in self-defence; and that is the law of nature. A casuist might ask why I hunted him so unrelentingly. I would answer, ' Revenge for a father's murder !' Nevertheless, it is, perhaps, fortunate for my soul that I killed him in personal conflict. This, however, rests on my unsupported testimony. How will it fare with me, if I am found here by the body? I must retreat to Manchester, get my wound dressed, and let things take their course."

Thus saying, Hibblethwaite turned his horse's head and left the spot.

Though he would hardly admit it to himself, Dick, for some years, had been studying in the school of adversity. True, he had carried things with a high hand—maintained a gay exterior—laughed and

joked, and drank and frolicked, and betted and lost, as if nothing more was necessary than to cry “*Presto!* and let the world pass.” But after all, this is the mere fever of desperation. Thought, ever and anon, would force its way ; and then the consciousness of time mis-spent — of money recklessly wasted — of character lost — of health injured — of miserable identity with vagabond gamblers — of criminal connivance, and the consequent forfeiture of self-respect, occasioned a fearful re-action which, in its turn, created a necessity for new and more intense dissipation — a remedy worse than the disease.

Hibblethwaite latterly, however, was sobered. As one of a reckless set of gamesters, who had robbed Lord Silverstick on the highway, the halter hung over his

head, and he knew it was prevented from falling only by the Earl's pride and paternal feeling, which could not suffer the appearance of his son (Lord Randy) as *particeps criminis*. Then Hibblethwaite had witnessed the shedding of Sir Theobald Chillingworth's blood, and had been compelled to lurk in holes and corners to avoid the pursuit of the law.

From the stupor brought about by all this, he was roused only by the insight he had obtained into Manesty's foul and deadly practices. A spirit of vengeance, thus excited, took possession of his soul, and drove him to break into what Shakspeare calls “the bloody house of life.” No wonder Dick learned the art of melancholy rumination, and self-reproach.

Oglethorpe and his man, unable to keep

up the chase farther than Irlam, had yielded to the fascinations of “The Nag’s Head,” in that place; and after swallowing pretty considerable potations of mixed liquor, rendered more captivating by the stout landlady who prepared it, returned to Liverpool, there to “hide their diminished heads,” and to await the course of events.

Early next day (for ghastly news flies quickly) the encounter between Hibblethwaite and Manesty was bruited about the town; and, though Dick was not forthcoming, Manesty’s death was proclaimed. The dismal intelligence, of course, reached Manesty’s office in Pool Lane, the house of Ozias Rheinenberger, and the mansion of Sir Hildebrand Stanley.

Robin Shuckleborough was so bewildered

at the misdeeds and danger of his master, that during the last day he scarcely knew whether he stood on his head or his heels. The poor fellow did nothing but walk about the counting-house, crying like a child and refusing to be comforted. The present doleful news froze the very blood in his veins.

“What will become of me now?” he kept saying to himself. “What is the use of all these ledgers and day-books? How is the trade of Liverpool to go on, now that John Manesty is slain? I wish I was dead with him. Oh, my unfortunate master!”

But who shall paint the agony of Hugh? His father’s crimes were all forgotten in the knowledge of his dreadful end.

Nor did Mrs. Yarington feel it less keenly. She had seen the approach of the

catastrophe; but now it had come to pass, she dared not contemplate it. Still she had a duty to perform to Hugh and Mary, and this she resolved not to delay. From what she had privately heard from the old gardener, who had charge of the manor-house at Wolsterholme, Mrs. Yarington knew that Manesty had deposited many documents under lock and key in the garden-room of that mansion, and she doubted not that other evidences capable of corroborating her story, would there be found. She would not, therefore, divulge what she knew till surrounded by testimonials of her veracity.

An urgent summons was sent to Hugh, who soon appeared at Eaglemont. A carriage was at the door, and at eleven o'clock

in the forenoon, the three friends started for Wolsterholme. Their journey was a melancholy and silent one; but, with frequent and quick change of horses, it was so speedily accomplished, that they reached the venerable manor-house at four in the afternoon. Like one familiar with the spot, Mrs. Yarington at once found her way to the garden-room, where a humble repast was placed before our travellers by the gardener, who, after they were refreshed, placed in Hugh's hands a sealed packet directed to him, to be opened only in case of the merchant's death. This had been deposited with the gardener just previously to Manesty's last voyage to the West Indies. It contained a key of the old oak cabinet which stood in the room where the party

were assembled. This was the key which Manesty had given to Hugh when he sailed for Antigua in 1760, but which he had re-claimed on his return to Liverpool.

The cabinet was found to contain the title-deeds of Wolsterholme Castle, or Manor-House, together with other parchments, proving the purchase by Manesty of all the lands and tenements originally belonging to the estate. By the merchant's will, also enclosed in the old cabinet, the entire property, as well as that of the concern in Liverpool, was bequeathed to his "dear son, Hugh Manesty." Of the legacies, the principal was a bequest of four thousand pounds to "his diligent and faithful clerk, Robin Shuckleborough." Tied up with the will was a letter addressed to

Hugh, (dated on his first departure to the West Indies,) which ran as follows:—

“ MY DEAR HUGH,

“ It will not be prudent to encounter the perils inseparable from a sea-voyage without ‘ putting my house in order,’ in case any fatal accident should happen to me. I have spoken to you of the old oak cabinet in the garden-room at Wolsterholme, and given you the key. In it are deposited my will, and other papers, wherein you at least will take a tender interest.

“ By successive purchases, the whole of the estate of Wolsterholme is mine; and I have become its master with the sole motive of endowing you with it, as the only remaining representative of the family. You

believe yourself to be a Wolsterholme, and so, in one sense, you are, being the son of a lady of that name, who was married to me. You are, therefore, *my* son, dear Hugh; and not, as you have imagined, the offspring of Cornet Wolsterholme, whose child died in America.

“ Among the papers in the oak cabinet, you will find many letters from your mother, addressed to me—letters which I have read again and again, with streaming eyes, in my solitary visits to the manor-house. Bertha Manesty (formerly Miss Wolsterholme, the only daughter of her house) has been many years lost to me. She died abroad; and with her died also what little happiness remained to me in this life.

“ If I perish at sea, do not be too curious

in inquiring into the several passages of my life; and, above all, destroy without examination whatever documents may be found in the late Mr. Hibblethwaite's room in my corn-store at Liverpool. Circumstances may occur to alter my decision in this respect; but this is my present wish. Obey it.

“ And now, my dear son, farewell! Preserve the pure and lofty character you have hitherto maintained. My blessing on you!

“ Your loving father,

“ JOHN MANESTY.

“ Pool Lane, Liverpool,
“ 12th of June, 1760.”

This letter (written four years previously to the present time) being read aloud

by Hugh, was heard with overpowering emotion by Mrs. Yarington. For some time, her tears overmastered her ; her frame was convulsed, and she could not speak. Mary and Hugh tried affectionately to comfort her.

At length, the paroxysm having abated, Mrs. Yarington produced a book she had brought with her from Eaglemont, and placed it in Hugh's hands.

“ Read the letters to which John Manesty alludes,” said she, “ and then refer to that book wherein I copied them previously to their being dispatched.”

“ You ?” exclaimed young Manesty, in surprise.

“ Yes !” returned she, in a broken voice, “ I am John Manesty's widow.”

“ Mother, mother !” gasped Hugh, throwing his arms about her neck.

“ Dear ! precious ! beloved !” were all she could articulate as, almost fainting, she fondly returned his embrace.

It was a trying moment to Mrs. Manesty, and she struggled hard to sustain it; but her voice was again gone, and she sobbed violently.

After a pause, but still not without an effort, she said, “ Dear Mary and dear Hugh, I am going to recount the only action of my life on which I look back with pain—an action of deceit. But listen, and you shall judge how grievously I was tempted. Kiss me once again, Hugh. There ! Now you shall learn how far I have forfeited your love.”

There was another pause, during which the widow, with a visage of constrained firmness, seemed summoning strength to support her during the utterance of what she was about to disclose. Assuming a calmness which she did not feel, she said, in measured tones—

“I am *not* your mother, Hugh; neither is John Manesty your father.”

“For the love of Heaven, do not torture me with suspense! Explain yourself!” ejaculated Hugh.

“You shall know all,” responded she. “When my brother, Wilford Wolsterholme, eloped with Hannah Manesty, John Manesty, unsuspected by his father, paid his addresses to me. This room was the scene of our stolen meetings—the witness of many pure and blessed moments. His earnestness and

devotion won my heart, and when he was sent to America, in pursuit of his sister, I accompanied him, having first been privately married. We were away from England two years; but even in that short space of time, my husband frequently absented himself from me, I knew not where, nor on what business; and even when we were together, our harmony was often disturbed by his furious expressions of hatred against my brother, who, he said, had grossly insulted him. Our meetings, however, were few, and at long intervals. During one of his absences from me, which lasted three months, I gave birth to a female child. You shall hear more, presently; let me pause a little."

There was silence for awhile. Hugh and Mary waited with eager anxiety for the

continuation of the narrative, but with entire deference to their friend.

“At this time,” resumed the widow, “and while John Manesty was away, news came to me that my brother had been killed in an obscure skirmish. It was not in any military affair; but in some private affray. If I was almost heart-broken at the news, Wilford’s widow was nearly mad with grief. She expected, poor thing! to be soon confined; but the agony of her sorrow brought on premature labour. A son was born to her, and she died. As my sister-in-law (a solitary widow) perished in a far and foreign land, destitute of friends, it was incumbent on me to take charge of the infant. I did so; and it shared with my own baby the nurture of my breast, and the affection of my

heart. I christened it 'Hugh,' after one of my own ancestors."

"Let me still call you mother," said the young man. "You have earned a right to that sacred name. And am I then once more a Wolsterholme?"

"Yes: you are Sir Hugh Wolsterholme —a title you inherit from your unfortunate uncle, Sir Thomas. I have a baptismal register, and other proofs substantiating your claim."

"But is not the title lost by attainder?" inquired Hugh.

"No; only in the person of my poor brother, who has been dead many years."

Mary felt that all bar to her marriage with Hugh was now removed. A timid glance at the young baronet expressed her congratula-

tion; but words of joy would have sounded discordantly at a time so laden with melancholy interest. Mary, therefore, dared not trust herself to speak.

“ I almost fear to ask what became of your daughter,” said Hugh to Mrs. Manesty; “ how it happened that the merchant believed me to be his son; and why you took the name of Yarington?”

“ I well tell you all,” replied she. “ My infant died soon after I took you—my brother Wilford’s child—to my bosom. Manesty was still absent. On his return to me, I told him that his sister and her child had both died, and shewed you as his own offspring. His paternal pride was pleased at beholding a son. A strong objection to the name by which you had been christened,

united with an absence of suspicion that such a deceit had been practised on him as the passing off his sister's child as his own, prevented (so I conceive) his asking for the baptismal register. The very day after I perpetrated this fraud, I bitterly repented it; but it was too late to avow the truth, and I dreaded the fury of his reproaches. I have been miserable ever since; so long and so unrelenting is the punishment of falsehood."

Here the widow again paused in her narration. At length Hugh inquired why Manesty believed she was dead.

"Another of my contrivances," responded she; "but you will regard this more charitably, considering my extreme provocation. Manesty again left me, on his

unexplained and inscrutable errands. I was not long, however, in understanding their object. I discovered that he was engaged in piratical practices of the worst and most cruel description, and that, under the name of Captain Hoskins, he commanded a notorious vessel called ‘The Bloody Juno.’ This was told me by one of his sailors, in revenge for some terrible punishment he had received on board; and from the same man I also heard that Manesty—in rage at a supposed affront—had waylaid and killed my brother; thus, by a natural consequence, causing his own sister’s death.”

“Dreadful!” exclaimed Hugh. “Thank Heaven that that man is not my father! And yet how kind and affectionate has he been to me! I may mourn over his crimes, but can never hate him.”

“ As he has paid the dreadful forfeiture,” returned the widow, “ let us remember him in our prayers.—But I hasten to conclude my story.—Having been acquainted with his monstrous deeds, of which, when once my eyes were opened, fresh proofs poured in on me every day, you will not wonder that I resolved never again to receive such a man as my husband. A message had been sent me announcing his return on a certain day, on the eve of which I departed from home, leaving a letter stating the horrible discoveries I had made, and adding that in grief and shame for him, and horror at being his wife, I should destroy myself. Such, indeed, was my first intention; though, when I reflected on the sinfulness of suicide, I resolved to come to England, take a feigned name, and seek a

livelihood. A heavy blow was thus inflicted on Manesty. He left his ship to be commanded by proxy, started with you to Liverpool, and addicted himself chiefly to commercial pursuits; still, however, receiving accessions of wealth from his man-stealing slave-ship. You now know all. I humbly hope that God will pardon my duplicity."

Twilight was now coming on. A disclosure of secrets so long pent up in her breast, had greatly agitated Mrs. Manesty; and she walked out of the room to enjoy the soothing influence of the fragrant evening air in the garden—that quaint old quincuncial garden, among whose formal alleys the days of her youth had been passed. Mary and Hugh stayed within, that heart

might speak to heart under the new prospects opening on them.

Short space, however, was allowed for their subdued felicitations. A loud shriek suddenly burst on the stillness, followed by the words, “John Manesty! John Manesty!”

Mrs. Manesty, who had screamed these words, rushed frantically into the house, and hid herself; and Hugh, darting to the window, beheld a horseman at a short distance, swaying to and fro on his saddle, like one in a drunken fit. As he drew nearer, the young man recognised his miserable uncle. The rider’s face could be likened only to a marble bust, blank and fixed; his eyes were set; and from his nerveless hand the bridle

had dropped. The white mare, poor Prue, seemed almost in as great extremity as her master. It was even as an incarnation of “Death on the Pale Horse.”

But the beast knew her way; sprang into the garden, and then drew up. Manesty lifted himself uncouthly from the saddle, and dropped heavily on the earth. Hugh darted towards him. A grim smile relaxed the features of the dying man, as he stared with a bewildered expression on him whom he deemed to be his son. But though speech was denied him, he had enough of strength to tear open his waistcoat, (as if appealing for help,) when his shirt, red in every part with blood, was seen. Distracted by terror, Hugh fetched the only servant in the house, the old gardener, to the spot.

Of what avail was anything they could do? Even had Manesty not been past all "skill in surgery," professional aid could not be procured in that remote place.

A reaction had now come over Mrs. Manesty; and her heart yearned once more to look upon the beloved of her youth. She approached the place where the gasping wretch lay. In the delusion of his dying moments, no doubt he took her for a vision. Reverently clasping the hand she held out to him, he pressed it to his lips, and then, looking fondly with his dim eyes at Hugh, drew a long breath, and expired.

Though mortally wounded by Hibblethwaite, the longing desire he had to reach Wolsterholme, under a belief that he could there secrete himself for a time, must have

given him preternatural strength, and enabled him, after he had recovered the first effect of the wound, to climb on Prue's back, and crawl on to the bourne of his wishes. How he was sustained during the long day, can never be known.

CHAPTER XXIX.

CONCLUSION.

SIX months had elapsed since the foregoing incident, and a change had taken place in the relative position of some of the parties concerned in this tale. Sir Hugh Wolsterholme, being now a wealthy baronet, had left the concern in Pool Lane to Robin Shuckleborough, who, for a consideration, had allowed Richard Hibblethwaite to become his partner. Having abjured his

former associates, Dick proved a good man of business, and by handsome presents to Broken-nosed Bob, and Ebenezer Rowbotham, secured their silence as to his participation in the robbery of Lord Silverstick. Lawyer Varnham lost his expected five hundred pounds when the portmanteau was reclaimed by Hugh, in virtue of Manesty's order, owing to the exposure which Measly Mott had not failed to make. Lord Randy had disappeared on a tour to Germany ; and his father, the Earl of Silverstick, was busy at court, propagating the proprieties of the Chesterfieldian code of morals, and trimming between Lord Bute and Mr. Pitt, (afterwards Lord Chatham.) The good and pious Rheinenberger was often a welcome guest at the manor-house at Wolsterholme,

where Mrs. Manesty lived in seclusion ; and, finally, with a pompous ceremony befitting their rank, Sir Hugh Wolsterholme led to the altar his beloved Mary Stanley.

THE END.

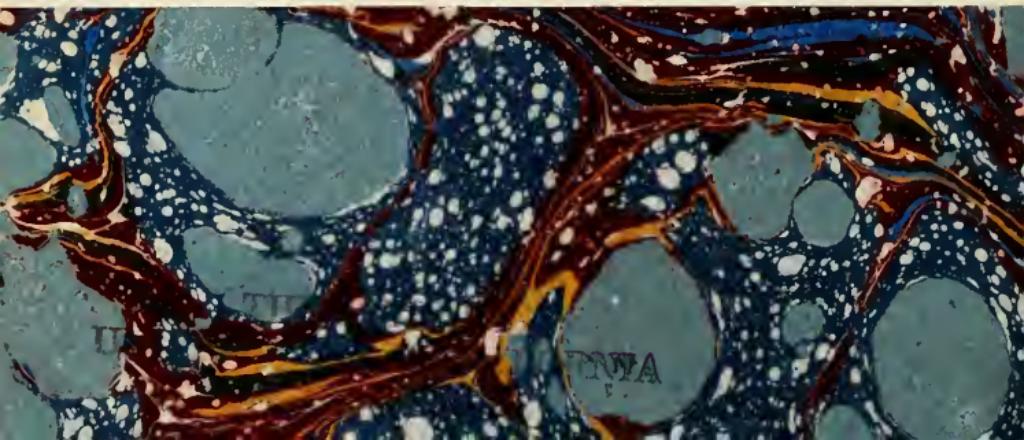
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